

A
Discourse
CONCERNING
REPENTANCE.

By *N. INGELÖ* D.D.

Ἡ ὁ μετάνοια αὕτη Φιλοσοφίας ἀρεχὴ
γένειαι, καὶ τῆς ἀμεταμελήτου ζωῆς
ἡ πρώτη ἀποκαλύψις.

L O N D O N,

Printed by *T. R.* for *Richard Marriott*,
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I

A
DISCOURSE
CONCERNING
REPENTANCE.

~~PART I~~

LUKE 24. 47.

*That Repentance and Remission of Sins
should be preached in his Name
among all Nations.*

WHen man came out of his
Creators hands, he was
happy, and so long as
he kept the state of his Nature he

A 3 con-

continued such; for he enjoyed his Makers favour, he walked with God, had a friendly Converse with him; and as he continually made a thankful acknowledgment of his dependance upon his Goodness, and perform'd due Obedience to his Will, so he was always under the care of his Providence, and the Influences of his Grace, which was so great a felicity, that his condition might well be signified by the name of the place in which he dwelt, *The Paradise of Eden*, i. e. *The Garden of Delight*.

But see the frailty of created Beings when they are a little trusted with themselves. Man soon fell from his happiness. He was
not

not content with his Makers allowance ; he would provide better for himself some other way. But so disregarding his Creators Laws, he threw himself out of the Divine favour , and with himself, his Posterity, treading in the same steps of Disobedience, though they knew how dear it cost their Forefather, by the miserable Inheritance which he left them : The unhappiness of the Estate so bequeathed being so heavy, that men when they considered it, would rather never have been born, than thrown under the weight of it : The merciful Son of God, with an unspeakable compassion, interposed himself between them and the dreaded Ruin, and interceded

A 4 for

for their pardon. The eternal Father was highly pleased with his Mediation; and as for his sake he did not lock the door of Hope against the first Runagate, so neither did he afterward shut up his disobedient Children in the irrecoverable misery of their Sin. For though they have cast themselves out of the Mercies of the ancient Covenant, by breaking the Conditions of it, yet the Son of God was pleased to be the Angel of a new Covenant, and brought it from Heaven, and sent his Celestial Messengers at his Birth to proclaim the Good-will which was contained in it, and seal'd it with his Blood, which when he was going to die, he
said

said he would *shed* for the remission of Sins: And having performed that Promise full of unspeakable kindness, when he was raised from the dead, he commanded his Servants, whom he had made intimate with the design of his Mercy, that they should publish it to all the World, and in his Name preach Repentance, and upon that promise forgiveness of sin, and declare that God would now accept of Return to Duty instead of Obedience which had never fail'd; and that all such of sinful Mankind as would run away from their disobedient Party, acknowledge their Fault, lament their Rebellion, throw down their Arms, yield to Mercy,

cy, and return to their Allegiance, should come to be as they were at first by Gods allowance, be put into the way of Happiness again: For by the forgiveness of their sins God restores them to his Favour; a Grace denied to a higher sort of Creatures than we are, Angels, when by sin they flung themselves out of Heaven.

I have designed this Discourse to treat of the way which God hath been pleased to accept, and our Saviour to declare, for our escaping the misery of sin, which is Repentance. And of this I shall speak as I find it described in the New Testament, where two words are chiefly used to express

press the nature of it, Μετανοια,
and Μεταμέλεια.

1. Change of mind as to what
is past.
2. Better care for the future.

And these I shall explain as
Holy Writ and the practise of
Gods Church do direct.

1. A change of mind as to
what is past ; So *Tertull.* *In Græ-*
co sono Pœnitentiæ nomen ab animi
demutatione compositum est ; which
he said respecting the word μετα-
νοια. He which repents must begin
with a severe condemnation of his
former course : So *Isidor. Pelusiota,*
l. 4. c. 60. Μερίση βοήθεια εἰς τὸ
μεταγίῳνα ἢ κατάνωσις τῆς ἀμαρ-
τίας.

τιας. How can he repent of what he hath done, who doth not condemn it as wicked? This part of Repentance expresseth it self in two things.

1. Humble Confession of Sin.
2. Earnest Prayer for Pardon.

1. Humble confession of sin, which is both required in many places of Scripture, and appears to have been the practise of Penitents. *He which confesseth and forsaketh finds mercy--- If we confess our sins he is faithful--- It is meet to be said unto God I have sinned----* He can never hope for pardon who will not confess his sin. As Confession belongs to
Re-

Repentance, so if it be right, it must have these two things joyned with it.

1. Sorrow,
and
2. Shame.

1. We must make our Confessions, having in our souls a great sorrow for having offended God, a great displeasure against our selves for our disobedience. When the Apostle perceived the *Corinthians* to have fallen into a great sin, he wrote a sharp Letter to them, and the consideration of that, and what they had done, wrought in them the beginning of Repentance, a godly ^{2 Cor. 7.9.} sorrow,

sorrow, or sorrow according to God, which he doth require, and will accept if it be sincere, according to the nature of the sin committed. It is fit that he who hath sinned should be grieved, when he considers what he hath done, and say as he did, *Eheu! quàm ego totus displiceo mihi! Pœnitentia denotat pœnam animi de re perperam gestâ sibi displicentis.* St.

Act. 2. *Peters* Penitents were said to be pricked in their Hearts; and the Scripture calls true Repentance a

Psal. 51. *broken heart, a contrite spirit.* And true Penitents usually expressed their sorrow in tears, with which

Psal. 5. 6. *David* is said to *water his Couch----* and *St. Peter*, upon consideration of his grand sin is said to have gone

gone, forth of the Company, and to have *wept bitterly*. He which truly considers what it is to have sinned, would if he could, wash away the stain with tears of blood. When the weight of the sins of others began to sit close and heavy upon our Saviours shoulders, it put him into such an Agony, that it made clammy drops of thick sweat, like viscous blood, trickle from his Body to the ground.

Therefore Penitents of old, to express their due grief, used to gird themselves with Sackcloth, and sit in Ashes: For anciently in great mournings it was the custom to put on Sackcloth, to cover their heads with Ashes, and sit in the Dust. As we see in the
Story

Story of the King of *Niniveb* in that great affliction of soul which surpris'd him upon *Jonas's* denunciation of wrath against him and his people; and in the case of *Thamar*, in the astonishing grief which seized her upon the loss of her Honour: So *Job* when he humbled himself for speaking too boldly of the mystery of Gods Providence, is said to have *repented in Sackcloth and Ashes*. To this also they joyned Fasting; acknowledging that by reason of their sins they were not worthy to eat, and so not to live; and when they did so, were said to *afflict their souls*: For true Penitents have, as the Apostle observed in the *Corinthians*, *Indignation* against their
their

their sins, and *Revenge* upon themselves for committing them. To these also in their Penance they added *Expiatory Offerings*, confessing when they kill'd the Sacrifice, they themselves deserved to die more than the *Lamb* or *Goat* did; *Quæ me non dignior hostia victa est?* There is nothing so bad but it deserves to live rather than I the sinner who offer it. They saw the vileness and danger of sin, and therefore cried out, *Men and Brethren, what shall we do to be saved?* Or as they in *Micah*, *O that I had any ἀντάλλαγμα, any thing to give in exchange for my soul to my offended God, thousands of Rams, or ten thousand Rivers of Oyl!*

B

By

By these Expressions we may perceive what a deep sense they had of the baseness of sin, and how truly they were grieved that by it they had offended God. To this I need add no more but the practise of the Primitive Church, to shew what a mighty sorrow the Penitents of those days thought necessary to their Repentance. It is enough to amaze careless Souls to read it as it is described by *Tertullian*, and St. *Gregory Nazianzen*. Penitents lay prostrate at the Church doors in Sackcloth, and Ashes, and Horror; intreating the whole Fraternity, begging the prayers of Presbyters and Widows, taking hold of the Garments and Knees of

*Tertul. de
Indici-
tia, & de
Peniten-
tia.
Greg.
Naz. de
Peni:en-
tia.*

of such as entred into the Church, kissing their footsteps, as well as the Chains of Martyrs in Prisons, with bare knees and wet eyes, beseeching their Prayers for their pardon.

And though the bad sinners of our times possibly think them foolish in so great expressions of sorrow, yet I doubt, when things come to be determined before the Great Tribunal of Christ, that they will be judged sottish for their vain Censure, and that want of great grief for their sins will not then be esteemed courage, but fearedness of Conscience. He is most miserable who sins and repents not; and his sorrow will do him little good, which doth not

B 2 wound

wound sin to the heart, which doth not smite through, and cut in pieces the roots of Disobedience, which are deep planted in a hard heart.

2. We are also to joyn shame with our sorrow : Shame is the proper attendant of sin, as we may see in our first Parents, who were so ashamed of themselves after they had sinned, that they sought, as well as they could, to hide themselves from the Face of God ; not only for fear of being punished by him, but being ashamed of themselves, that for doing unworthily they had deserved it. There is great reason we should entertain this passion of soul. The penitent sinner will find things enough

nough to be ashamed of, if he consider. What are they? Five.

1. His Impudence, that he durst sin against God; therefore *Ezra* in his penitent Confession of the great sins which he then lamented, says, *O my God, I am ashamed* Ezr. 9.5. *to look up, and blush to lift up my face to thee; for our iniquities are increased, and our sins are grown up to Heaven. We are in our trespasses,* v.15. *and cannot stand before thee, because of them.* He was so ashamed, that he says, *And now, O our God, what* v.16. *shall we say, for we have forsaken thy Commandments?* So the Penitent in *Jeremiah*, *When I repented I was* Jer. 31. *ashamed---* And the Converts whom 19. *St. Paul* mentions, were ashamed to think of their former practise;

B 3 What

Rom. 6.
21.

What fruit had you in those things whereof you are now ashamed? There is great Reason for this. For men are ashamed when they do any thing that is unbecoming them. It is a base thing for a man to do that which is unworthy of what he is, or professeth himself to be. Sin is the most unbecoming thing in the World, contrary to our Nature, unworthy of a reasonable Creature, absurd in regard of our state in Being; doth debase and degrade the person that commits it. Therefore when *Aaron* had consented to Idolatry with the people, it is said, *They made him naked to his shame.* What a High Priest and worship a Calf? A Creature and disobedient to him that

that made it! It is said of the Jews, when converted, that they *should loath themselves for all their abominations.* Nothing can make us so vile as sinning against God. He which consents to sin, disrobes himself of the dignity of his Nature, Innocence. And when men come to that impudence, that they are not ashamed of sin, it is noted in Scripture as the height of all Villany, and is a state near to utter Ruin. Men may grow so base as to *glory in their shame; i. e.* in such things of which they ought to be ashamed, as the Apostle tells us, and make no matter of it. So the Prophet *Jeremiah* of those in his time, *Were they ashamed when* Jer. 6. 15. *they had committed abomination; no,*

B 4 they

Jer. 5. 3. they were not ashamed, neither could they blush. No ; but as in another place, they had a Whores forehead, made their faces harder than a Rock. But their ruin followed at their heels, and overtook them all, except some few , who repenting, shar'd another temper, and said,

— 3 25. We lie down in shame, and our confusion covereth us ; for we have sinned against the Lord our God, and have disobeyed his voice. So the repenting Prodigal, O Father , I have sinned against Heaven and against Thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy Son. He had done things unworthy of a Son, and being ashamed of himself, would be glad to creep out of that base self the Son, so he might be become a good

good Servant. He was ashamed to think he had been a Son , because he had carried himself so vilely in that state.

2. Shame is due to the folly which those who sin are guilty of. He which sins reveals his folly sufficiently in this, that either he understands not his Interest, or flights those things which are of greatest import to him ; and therefore Fool is the proper name of a sinner in Holy Language. For what good reason that Title is bestowed upon him, you may see in these four particulars.

1. He which sins thinks to be happy in a better way than that which God hath directed him to, and is so silly as not to understand the

the meanness of these things for which he forsakes his God, and the sad Consequences of his Disobedience. How great is the disproportion which is between the pure joy which flows into the soul from the sense of Gods favour, and the muddy pleasure which in any Channel whatsoever can be deriv'd from sin ? It is but little, and very impure, mixed with dreadful Al-lays. This is so great a stupidity, that the Prophet brings in the Heavens as wondring at it. *Be astonished, O ye Heavens at this, and be ye horribly afraid, saith the Lord, for my people have committed two evils ; they have forsaken me the Fountain of Living Waters, and hewed them out Cisterns , broken Cisterns , which can hold*

Jer. 2.
12, 13.

bold no water. 'Tis true it was applied, principally to their forsaking the living God, to serve dead Idols; *Hath a Nation changed their Gods, which yet are no Gods? but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit.* It was a strange Impudence in those wicked Jews of whom this Prophet speaks, who when they were in a bad Condition, made such by their sins, would mend it by their sins. They were in captivity because of their wickedness, and in particular for Idolatry, and were told so by the Prophet; See what use they made of it, *We will burn Incense to the Queen of Heaven, and pour out drink-offerings to her, as did our Fathers, who were then well, and had plenty* of

Jer. 11.

Jer. 44.

Jer. 17.

of all things — Lyars! They were now in Famine for that Disobedience, and yet said, we will do what hath come into our minds; when as all the Prosperity which they enjoyed before, was from observing Gods Commands; and they bereav'd themselves of it now by forsaking God, as the Prophet told them before, that they procured this to themselves, in that they forsook the Lord their God: And that their own wickedness should correct them, and make them know that it was an evil thing and bitter that they had forsaken God, and that the fear of displeasing him was not in them; and that it should enter into their heart, i. e. to gnaw it, when they

*Jer. 2. 17,
19.*

they considered what they had done. What less folly are they guilty of, who forsake the peace of Conscience and hope of Immortality, and pleasures of Divine Favour, for the embraces of an Harlot, voluptuous Riots, unjust Gain, or for all that Good that any, or all sorts of sin can bring in exchange? When they come to themselves, as it was said of the Prodigal (for a sinner is out of his wits) they say to themselves as the Apostle did to the *Romans*, *What profit have we of those things which now only produce shame in our souls?* Or as that great Souldier when he saw the folly of his base Condescension, in the sad Consequences of it, Ὡς Θεὸς ὡς σμικρῆς ἰδονῆς

ἡδονῆς ἔνεκα ἐκ Βασιλέως δόλον
 ἐμαυτὸν πεποίηκα ; So the Prodi-
 gal, I have left the bread, and all
 good entertainments of my Fa-
 thers house, to feed upon Husks
 with Swine. I have of a Free-
 man made my self a slave to Cor-
 ruption. When *David*, not weigh-
 ing things in the Balance of the
 Sanctuary , *i. e.* esteeming them
 as God doth, according to the true
 worth, did undervalue the hap-
 piness of good men, because they
 wanted that prosperity which he
 saw some wicked men enjoy; when
 he came to consider better, how
 did he condemn the folly of his
 former thoughts in these words ,
 Ps. 73. 22. — *So foolish was I and ignorant , I
 was as a Beast before thee. But as*
 I

I have none in Heaven but thee, so in Earth there is nothing that I can desire in comparison of thee. Thy fa- Ps. 63.2.
our is better than life, or any thing in it. This was the folly of the first finners, they would mend the estate God had put them in, by following their own counsels, and so for the slight and short pleasure which they had in eating forbidden fruit, lost the joy of Divine Favour, and the peace of their own Consciences, and flung themselves into shame and fear.

Art not thou ashamed whoever thou art which consents to sin, to throw thy self out of the joy of thy soul, a serene tranquillity of mind, into melancholy and grief, when thou seest how by sin thou hast debased

based thy self, lost thy honour, and devested thy self of the Dignity and Pleasure of Vertue for some mean satisfaction of bodily Appetite, and indulging some vile Affection?

2. The folly of Sin appears more; he which disobeys God will transgress his Laws, and go beyond the bounds which God hath set, though they lay no curb upon Appetite, nor stop the course of Action ~~but~~ to preserve us from that mischief, into which we shall fall if we go farther than they permit. A madman will on, though you stop him only upon the top of a Precipice. Is not the pleasure of single Life enough with Chastity and Divine Love? or if Nature

re-

requires another state; are not the modest allowances of Marriage enough, without the unclean pleasures of forbidden Beds? Is not the satisfaction of eating and drinking to a temperate chearfulness, much better than to be drown'd in excess of Wine, and choked with Gluttony and Surfets? Is not a competency of worldly Means sutable to the necessities of our Condition, and number of our Relatives thankfully enjoy'd, better than the tormenting content of a ravenous Temper, which makes the man haunted with it, always to endeavour to add House to House, Land to Land, and to encrease his Heap with unjust Actions, as well as greedy Desires?

C

When

When the Fool, which makes a mock of sin, comes to himself, and is made to see what he hath done, his countenance will fall, as it was said of *Cain*, and he will be ashamed to have parted with the sprightly, erect temper of his Soul, which with Innocence he had in the favour of God, when by sin he finds himself depressed, grieved, undone. *Sampson* broke the Law of his God, which as a Nazarite he had upon him, and suffered a Harlot to cut off his Hair, but when he went out to shake himself, as he said, and found the Spirit of God departed from him, what horror with shame, with despondence of Soul, seiz'd upon him?

3. The

3. The folly of a sinner appears also in this, that he is not sensible of the great danger which his sin leads him into; no, though he hath been often told of it. See this point of Folly in a few Particulars.

1. He minds not that an action once done cannot be recalled, and that therefore sin once committed cannot be undone, *Non est nunquam omnino scisse, facere cessasse,* He which sins makes himself guilty.

2. He acts as supposing that he may be happy without the Divine Favour, or may disobey and not lose it; as if God could stand Neuter among men in the World, and did not impartially weigh the

actions of men, and were not of purer eyes than to behold Iniquity. But the Fool sins on, neither minding the threatnings which are annexed to the Laws which he breaks, nor considering that he who made those threatnings is Almighty, and so can both put them in execution, and appoint such punishments as we can neither imagine nor endure.

3. The sottishness of the security appears more plainly, because God hath declared that he hath appointed a day wherein he will judge the World in Righteousness. Is thy heart set to do evil, because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily? Shall a Malefactor think himself well, because he is not

Act. 17.

31

not hanged as soon as condemned, when the Judge hath set a day for his Execution ? Alas ! what small security is in that short respite ? Dost thou not know that the goodness of God leads thee to Repentance , and yet wilt sin , and so treasure up wrath to thy self , by hardness of heart , against the day of the Revelation of Gods just Judgment ? The Fool puts the Evil day far from him, which how near it is, God only knows.

4. This is also one addition to this folly, that he will sin when he hath been told not only that there is a set Day of Judgment , and consequently of Punishment , though delayed a while ; but also that a sinner, by a course of im-

penitence, may be shut up in a state inevitably obnoxious to the punishment of that Day, a long while before the person dies, and so comes to his particular Judgment. One may so much grieve the Lord, as the Israelites did in the Wilderness, that he will *swear they shall never enter into his rest*— They may sin so long that no place is left for Repentance, and so no hope of Mercy. It is a dreadful curse when God saith, *Let them fall from one wickedness to another*, that so often, and the sins so great, that they *never come into his Righteousness*, Gray hairs are upon the foolish sinner, and he perceives not that he grows old in sin and guilt. *My Spirit shall not always strive*

strive with men. Pharaoh having hardened his heart against several miraculous Declarations of Gods Power and Anger, was irrecoverably destinated to Ruin, though God told him that he preserved *Exod.* him a while to show his power and anger upon him, before he utterly destroyed him. The sins of the Amorites were not at the full. *Gen. 15.* Who knows whether he hath filled up the measure which God will stop at? yet fond sinners add to it daily. When our gracious Saviour perceived Jerusalem to be in this case, he wept over it, and said, O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how oft would I have gathered thee! O that thou hadst in this thy day seen the things which belong to thy peace,

but now they are hid from thine eyes. We know that men by sin may grow so stupid, as to their minds, that they will pray for life to that which is dead ; and as to their Affections , they may be given up to those which are so vile, as that it is a shame to mention them ; and grow so base that they will sell Heaven, as *Esau* did his Birth-right for a Mess of Pottage. I have heard of a man, who having been drunk overnight, and passed over a very narrow Bridge , which no sober Horseman durst attempt , being brought the next day to see what danger he went through, fell down in a swoon upon the sight of it. But sinners are so besotted with the love of sin, that they will

will on, though they are shewed before that the Bridge they are going to is impassable, and that the Lake of Fire and Brimstone is under it.

This is enough to have shown the folly of sin, which whosoever is guilty of, when he considers it, will find reason enough to be ashamed of himself.

3. The third consideration in this matter is that high Injustice of which he makes himself guilty that sins. There is nothing in the world so due to any person, as Obedience is to God. That which is made by another, ought to receive Law from him. There is nothing more absurd in Nature, than for a Creature to be its own Lord.

This was the Root upon which the misery of Mankind grew at first, that they would be *sui juris*, their own Law-givers: and so still, he which sins knows no Rules but his own Appetites, and thus he declares in his Actions. And sometimes it comes to that boldness that he says so in words too, as those Miscreants, *Our lips are our own; who is Lord over us?* Monstrous absurd! It is not so unjust or shameful for Lacqueys to ride on Horseback, and Princes to attend them on foot, as for a Creature to think to be at its own dispose, and to speak and do what it will. No, said those pious souls who understood their estate, *thou hast made us, and not we our selves.* And

And therefore , as the Apostle adds, we should so speak, and so do, as those who shall be judged by the Creators Law, and give an accompt to him who will pass a severe sentence upon the injustice of Disobedience.

Men are mightily concerned for their own dues, and take it ill if any deprive them of their Right. 'Shall not the God of heaven and earth regard what is due to him by a Right which is transcendent to all created propriety? See what notice God takes of his wrongs, *A Son honoureth his Father , and a* Mat. 1. 5. *Servant his Master. If then I be a Father , where is mine Honour? If I be a Master, where is my fear? Art not thou ashamed, who art by nature*

nature but a Servant, to deny the homage which is due to the Sovereign Lord of the World, and yet art very careful of those petty Rights which are only due to thee by his appointment? Dost thou think it a shame for Creatures to do unjustly to one another, and yet dost not blush to wrong thy God? This is so strange a thing in Gods accompt, that as the Prophet *Malachi* tells us God wonders at it;

Mal. 3. 8. 9. *Will a man rob God?* It is most unlikely ; yet you have robbed me. God had bestowed the Land of *Canaan* upon them, but reserved to himself , as Lord Proprietor , several Tithes and Offerings which he would have paid to him , as an Acknowledgment of himself, of whom

whom they held what they enjoyed. They pay'd not these Dues. But God doth not care for it possibly. Doth he not? See what follows; *Ye are curs'd with a dreadful curse, because you have robbed me, even this whole Nation.*

He which truly repents, turns with shame for the wrong which he hath done to his God, and blushes as a penitent Thief when he brings back stolen goods. *As a Thief is ashamed when he is found, so is the House of Israel.* Jer. 2.26. And so we read in the Confessions of those good men which prayed to God for 'em, when they made their Repentance publick, they were ashamed and confounded when they considered the wrongs which they

they had done to God. *To thee, O Lord, belongs Righteousness, but*
Dan. 9. 7. 8. to us shame and confusion of face :
 to us, not only the men of *Judah*,
 and Inhabitants of *Jerusalem*, but
 to our Kings and Princes, *because*
we have sinned against thee. So
Ezra and others.

4. This shame is heightened
 by this, in that he which sins a-
 gainst God is guilty of most hai-
 nous Ingratitude. He which sins
 offends his most good God, abu-
 seth his best Friend. Dost not
 thou who sinnest, slight him in
 whom thou livest, movest, and
 hast thy being, affront him
 who hath fed and clothed thee all
 thy days? This Ingratitude is so
 great an aggravation of the base-
 ness

ness of sin, that the Prophet *Isaiah* astonished at it, cries out in Gods behalf, *Hear O Heavens, give ear O Earth*; why, whats the matter? *I have nourished and brought up Children, and they have rebelled against me.* Why, is that such a matter that God should resent it on that fashion? Yes. For as it follows, it is a vileness so low that Beasts are not capable of it; *The Ox knows his owner, and the Ass his Masters Crib*: and as they come for meat to their Masters, so they serve in grateful return for what they receive. *But Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.* They neither have a sense of me their God, nor of the Favours they have received from me, nor consider

Isa. 1. 2, 3.

der the Obligation which is upon them to obey me , nor how ungrateful they are in not obeying , nor the baseness of their Ingratitude whilst they disobey. So *Jerem. 2. 31.* *Jeremiah , Have I been a wilderness to Israel , or a land of darkness , that they say we are Lords , we will come no more at thee ?* I thought I had been to them that Fountain of goodness at which they drank all their days. I thought that by the constant Irrigations of Mercy I had made their souls like a watered garden. But it was true of them which was said of *Hezekiah*, *2 Chron. 32. 25.* *He returned not as he received* , neither for his recovery from a deadly Sickness, nor deliverance from the potent Army of the *Assyrians*.
There-

Therefore the Penitent hath good reason to say, I am ashamed, O Lord, I blush to think how many mercies I slight, how many obligations I trample upon, how basely unthankful I have been. Doth *Jesurun* kick, and forget it was undeserved mercy which made him fat? Because thou art full dost thou sin, and not remember that thou rebellest against him who fed thee? *O foolish people and unwise, do you thus requite the Lord?* Or as the Prophet, Dost thou not know that I gave thee thy Corn and Wine, saith God, and that I multiplied thy silver and thy gold? I will return and take away my corn, wine, and wooll, and make thee know with what ingratitude
D thou

*Deut. 32.
6.*

*Hos. 2. 8,
9.*

thou hast forgot thy Benefactor and chief Patron.

The Penitent may do well to increase this shame in his soul, by the consideration of some of the chief mercies by which God hath laid Obligations of Obedience upon him ; and that will make him say with *Ezra*—*Have I sinned, having received such deliverance as this? —Was I delivered to do abominations? O my God, I am ashamed to look up to Heaven—I blush and hide my face.*

And to all considerations of Ingratitude add always this, never to be forgotten, the Love of thy Saviour in dying for thy sins, and then thou wilt say, Do I please my self with committing sin, when
my

my Saviour in pure love suffered so much pain with infinite amazements upon the Cross for it? What am I so base as to trample under my feet the Blood of the Son of God, and to scorn the prayers and tears of my Saviour? Those whom this consideration doth not make ashamed now, will be confounded with it for ever hereafter, and beg Rocks to fall upon them, that they may not come into the presence of that Friend whom they have so vilely abused; not only because they see him now so great that he can take vengeance upon them, but because they perceive themselves so base by Ingratitude, that they highly deserve it.

D 2

5. Lastly,

5. Lastly, The Penitent hath great reason to be ashamed of sin, as for the aforementioned Considerations, so for this that he hath made them out of measure sinful by a horrid Perfidiousness. He which sins at first breaks the ὅρκον ἐνδοσιωμῆς, the Oath which is interwoven with our being, of which the Philosopher spoke; God making no Creature but of which he takes an Oath, by the Law of its Nature, that it shall be obedient to him: But he is perfidious also, because he breaks those voluntary Promises which the sense of Obligations laid upon him, engaged him to make to God. Sure this will make the Penitent blush, when he finds reason to say to his soul,

O

O my soul ! Art not thou only so vile as to consent to sin against God, but also to do it when thou hast vowed not to do so ? and when those Vows were made upon most serious deliberation, and for those Reasons which thou dost still acknowledge to be most weighty ?

This is enough to have said to shew , not only how necessary Confession of sin is to Repentance, but also how fit it is that sorrow and shame for sin committed should be joyned to the Confession of it. Yet this must not be understood so, as if they were only applicable to some penitential solemn acts of Confession ; for they are to be continued through our

D 3 whole

whole life : For a good man will always be sorry , and ever ashamed that he had once sinned. Though God forgive , a true Penitent will hardly forgive himself. A Heathen could say, That if we believe there is a Providence , he which hath sinned shall not be despised if he grow good ; Καὶ παλαῶν μηνιμάτων ἐφέλκηται σῆγμα-
 ζα, yet he shall carry some marks of old displeasure : For as another said, Μένεσιν ἐν ταῖς ψυχαῖς τῶ μετάνοεντων ἔλατ' καὶ τόποι τῶ ἀρχαίων ἀδικημάτων, there remains in the souls of Penitents the marks of old sins, as scars do in the flesh , though the wounds be healed.

2. To Confession the Penitent must add earnest Prayer for pardon. This we learn from our blessed Saviour, who hath taught us to put this into our Prayers, as a chief petition,—*Forgive us our Trespases*. Shall God forgive such as do not entreat him to do so? It is fit the sinner should fall upon his knees before the Eternal Father, and beg pardon. When *Daniel* understood by reading the Prophecy of *Jeremiah*, that the time was at hand in which God had promised so to pardon the sins of the Jews, as to return their captivity, then he set himself to *seek it of God by supplication and prayer*. Dan 9. 2, 3. Why so? Because the promise was made upon condition that they

D 4 should

Ex-t.
35. 37.

should repent of their sins which carried them captive, and pray for pardon and return : For so we read, *I will plant that which was desolate . and build the ruinous places—I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel , to do it for them ; i. e.* I will grant it to them when they pray for it. Hereupon this holy man began in prayer to do his part, and directed them to do theirs.

But as Prayer for Pardon is a Duty unquestionable, so Fervency is a qualification so requisite, that without it Prayer will not be accepted , as it appears by what our Saviour hath taught us in his Sermons , the Apostles in their Epistles, sincere Penitents in their practise,

practise, and of which we are assured, because it hath ever been made a condition of the Forgiveness promised.

It is usually expressed thus, They shall find me if they seek me with their whole heart : Accordingly they are said to have sought God *with their whole desire*. We read of the Prayer of Faith saving the sick, and obtaining forgiveness of sins ; but the reason given in the next verse, shows what kind of Prayer it must be, *The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much* ; *Δένσις ενεργυμένη*. The word signifies high, and therefore Translators use two to express the meaning of it. No doubt rightly ; For the Apostle intended such

2 Chron.
15. 15.

James 5.
5.

v. 15.

such prayer as in which the most lively working of the soul expresseth it self. The same word *St.*

Gal. 5. 6. Paul used, speaking of Faith which saves, where he says that it is *δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη*, i. e. which shows its vertue in a powerful operation, and so is all one with *ἐνεργής*, as appears by two other places in his Epistles put together: For when he says of the

*1 Thess.
2. 13.*

Heb. 4. 12.

Word of God, that it is *ἐνεργῶν*, *μυστήριον*, he says it is *ἐνεργής*, quick and powerful in working. This is enough to show the meaning of the word; now to apply it to our purpose. If such a fervency of soul was requisite when a righteous man prayed for the forgiveness of other mens sins, what is

re-

quisite when an unrighteous man prays for the pardon of his own ?

Sure he needs to do as St. James *James 17.*

saith, προσευχῇ ὡς ἐν ἑαυτῷ, to pray very earnestly ; vehemency being usually signified in Hebrew by the gemination or joyning the Verb with the Noun.

The truth is, he which begs forgiveness of God in a languid Prayer, doth declare plainly that he neither minds to whom he prays, nor for what : He which intreats God to forgive him his sins, and understands how great a thing he asks, and is sensible in what need he stands of it, and withal how unworthy he is to receive it, and considers the greatness of the Person of whom he begs it, and how much

much goodness that is which will bestow it, and consequently how high a favour it must be if he receive it, will pray with all possible earnestness for it. It is not fit to put up any cold petition to God, much less when we beg so great a matter. How earnestly would a condemned man beg his life of the Judge, if he might have it for asking; or but hope by entreaty to revoke the sentence passed against him? *St. Paul* useth another expression, well signifying the same thing, ἀγωνίζεσθαι ἐν κυρίῳ προσευχῶν, to strive earnestly in Prayer, as *Jacob* did when he wrestled with the Angel, and would not let him go till he blessed him.

When

When our blessed Saviour was in an Agony, *i. e.* in conflict with those amazing horrors which the guilt of our sins set before him, he is said to have prayed often, and as that dreadful weight pressed harder, he prayed more earnestly, *ἐκτενέστερον*, extending, as I may say, all the power of his soul to its utmost compass; shewing the earnest working of his soul after he had risen from his knees, by throwing his holy Body upon the ground, lying prostrate before the Eternal Father, as the Author to the *Hebrews* tells us, offering Supplications with strong cries and tears to him who was able to save him, and was so delivered from his fear, Hear, O Penitent, was thy

thy Saviour so earnest in his prayers in the conflict which he endured for the sins of others, and art thou dull and flaccid in prayer for the pardon of thy own? Sure thou art not sensible what kind of thing Divine Wrath is, or dost not believe that sin brings with it an obligation to make the Offender suffer it? dost thou think thy self able to endure it? or it may be persuadest thy self that it may be escaped some other way? Awake, awake, O drouzy soul, and pray mightily to God that thy sins may be forgiven thee, that thou mayst not fall into the hands of the Living God, who is a consuming fire; pray that thou mayst be pardoned, and so not be thrown into everlasting

verlasting burnings. If thou be'st unconcerned or lazy in this matter, thou art more prophane than *Eſau*, who though he was vile enough in ſelling his Birth-right, yet when the Bleſſing was departed from him, he not only prayed for the reverſion of the ſentence by which it was done, *but ſought it carefully with tears.*

Thus much will ſerve to have ſpoken of the firſt part of Repentance, which though it be neceſſary to be done, yet the ſecond muſt be added to it. Having perfectly changed our minds as to what is paſt, and heartily begg'd pardon for it, we muſt be ſure to have better care for the future. He which doth not the firſt, will never think

think of the second ; and though he have done the former, if he proceed not to the latter , it will do him no good, it being no better than Corn in the blade which never comes to an Ear. As *Tertulian* said well, *Quid enim ex Pœnitentia maturescit nisi Emendationis fructus?* Repentance is fruitless except it bring forth a better life. Present penitence without future obedience are words which signifie nothing in Christian Religion.

When *John* the Baptist did receive Disciples upon profession of Repentance, which they made by confessing their sins to him, he bad them not think that this would restore them to the Divine Favour ,

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except they brought forth fruits agreeable to that Profession; that is, works correspondent to it: and he assur'd them, that the Ax then laid to the Root of the Tree, would cut it down, if it did not bring forth those fruits; and that fair Leaves should not save it from being cast into the fire.

Matt. 3.
7, 8.
Act. 25.
26.

Of this second part of Repentance I shall speak in this Method.

1. By shewing the true nature of after Care, and what is requisite to make it acceptable.

2. By making Exhortation to this Duty, which I shall do only by these Motives, taken

1. From the Reasonableness of Repentance in its own nature.
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2. From

2. From the great Encouragement which we have to it from the goodness of God, who is willing to forgive sinners if they repent.
3. From the great and inevitable mischief which awaits those who will not repent.

There are two things which will make our Repentance acceptable : our Return to God will always be so, if it be

1. Speedy.
2. Sincere.

1. The vileness of sin is so great,
 as I shew'd before, that a Penitent

tent cannot reflect seriously upon it, but he must needs think it fit to undo it as soon as he can. This we see in *St. Peter*; as soon as he thought what he had done, he went presently out *and wept bitterly*, endeavouring, as soon as possibly he might, to wash away his sin with tears. — Excellent is the counsel which *Salvian* gives in this case, *Illico ubi concidere consurgant & elevationem protinus meditentur in lapsu, ac si fieri ullo modo pernicitate pœnitudinis potest, tam velox sit remedium resurgentis, ut vix possit vestigium apparere collapsi.* He which Repents quickly declares how willing he was not to have sinned.

1. This is reasonable; for no man is sensible of danger approach-

E 2 ing

ing, but he will endeavour to prevent it as soon as he can, and he may delay so long that it will grow impossible. If a mans House be on fire, will he not presently endeavour to quench it? If he be bitten with a Serpent, doth he not seek for present remedy? He which is fallen into sickness makes haste to send for a Physician, every body knowing that recovery is then most to be hoped for, when proper Remedies are used in time. A Disease may prevail so far by neglect of those Medicines which would have cured it at first, that neither they nor any other will be able to do it afterward. Delay in this affair makes the work grow harder. By repeating of sin the Offender hardens

dens his heart; and though afterwards he turn Penitent, he will find his task more difficult, because instead of a flighter disposition, which he might have more easily conquered at first, he must now conflict with a firm habit. Shall he which cannot outgo a Footman hope to outrun Horsmen?

2. The demerit of sin encreaseth by delaying to return. Can he hope for mercy who hath stood out in rebellion to the last? He which delays to repent treasures up wrath against himself, when as God knows, if his wrath be kindled but a little, there is no man able to endure it. It is strange that any Conceit should come into a mans Head that acknowledgeth his dependance

E 3 upon

upon God, to make him defer his return to him by repentance. It is possibly this, He means at last to repent of his negligence. Doth he, and yet is deliberately negligent at present? It is a new sort of Vertue this, to sin pretending an intention to repent; and as odd a kind of wisdom to abuse infinite goodness in hope to find that favour, of which the course of life which we chuse makes us infinitely unworthy, and being continued in will give us strong reasons to despair of when we dy.

3. Pardon is not to be had, nor repentance, when we will. He who is so gracious, that he pleaseth to pardon when we truly repent, hath not promised we shall have
grace

grace to repent when we please.
We are advised in Holy Writ to
seek the Lord whilst he may be found : Iſa. 55. 6
and when that is we are told, *I love* Prov. 8.
them that love me, and those that seek
me early shall find me. 17.

How applicable this is to the
matter of Repentance, we may see
by what is said in the fifth and sixth
verses of *Pſalm 32*. *David* was in
great distress by reason of Divine
Wrath, which lay upon him for his
sins ; whereupon he took himself
to repentance, speedily bewailing,
and openly confessing his Faith to
to God, and so returning to his du-
ty found pardon. *For this shall e-*
very one that is godly pray unto thee
in a time when thou mayest be found.
He that knows how great a matter

it is to be reconciled to an offended God, and that there is a time of finding mercy, which if it be sliptr, the finner is eternally undone, will thereupon make what speed he can to return to God, and humbly seek his favour in a seasonable address, lest he lose himself with the opportunity.

It is not many years since the Master of a Ship loitering ashore, and not taking the advantage of one Tide when the Wind blew fair, with which other Ships went out, was forced by contrary Winds to stay in the Port till the forementioned Ships made their Voiage, and return'd. They are bold people, but extremely sottish, who slight opportunities of doing that which be-

belongs to their chief good, when they know they cannot command the stay or return of such seasons. Dost thou slight God in thy youthful health, when to have served him early is the unspeakable consolation of old age, and which they who then want it would purchase with all the World, if they had it, upon their Death-bed? Is not old age burthen enough except it be plagued with the heavy remembrance of a wicked life? This hath made many to cry out with him in the Tragedy,

Οἱ μοι. Τί δὴ βεβροῖσιν ὅκ' ἔσι τόδε, *Euripid.*
Νέες δὲ εἶναι, &c.

Alas

Alas for me, that men may not grow younger twice, and as often old, that so I might in my after life correct what was not well done in the former part of it.

4. Though a man begin never so soon, this work of Repentance is not to be done of a sudden : It will require great pains, and much time; and therefore none is to be lost. Can sin, which hath taken deep root in the soul, be drawn up at the first pull ? Can our unwillingness to do it be mortified in a moment ? Is a habit of sin soon master'd ? No; but as we have been longer in contracting it, and so making it stronger; it will not be conquered but by the contrary habit of Vertue, which requires
time

time to be implanted, grow and get strength in the soul. It may be that we have many Vices to overcome, and do we hope to do that presently? We have committed many Errors, and can we repent of them all on a sudden? We have many things to do, and those not easie to one accustomed to sin; We are to make our selves Vessels meet for our Masters use, but it will require time to do it, considering how we are put out of order by sin; and therefore all possible speed is necessary in the practise of Repentance.

2. As Repentance must be speedy, so it must be sincere; and that we shall find, if it answer those descriptions of it which are given in
holy

holy Scripture, vvhhere it is called *The renewing of the mind, crucifying the old man and his deeds, putting off the body of sin and destroying it, crucifying the flesh with the affections and lusts, purging our selves from all filthineß of flesh and spirit, and perfecting holineß in Gods fear, being made new creatures and partakers of a Divine Nature, vvith many more expressions to the same purpose.*

The Sense of which is comprehended in these four Particulars.

1. Sincere Repentance begins in a change of the inward disposition; for which Reason the true Convert is called *a new man*, as we learn from *Eph. 4.* and the alteration is so great, that it denominates the

the Penitent to be *a new Creature*; which is not meant as to Transubstantiation of Nature, but Emendation of Temper, making the Penitent not another person, but a better Man. A few Scriptures considered will make this so plain, that every one may know what it means, and judge himself accordingly. It consists in two things,

1. In change of Apprehension.
2. In Alteration of Affection.

1. In change of Apprehension; he which is truly Penitent hath another sense of things than he had before, which the Apostle calls

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renewing in the spirit of the mind, by which he now understands the goodness of God, and perceives that to be perfect and most acceptable, of which he had but mean thoughts before. *The carnal mind perceives not the things of God, they are foolishness to him*; he understands no reason in them: but the true Penitent hath received another mind, is made spiritual, and so can discern them, and acknowledges that to be the chiefest wisdom, which before he accounted extream folly. He which lives in sin is so besotted with carnal Lust, that he can see no reason in Spiritual things; no more can a blind man judge of colours. The true Penitent thinks highly now of the
fa-

favour of God, which he regarded not before; and counts all things dross in comparison of the knowledge of Christ, which he despised before; understands the Promises to be of infinite value, which he contemned before; he is convinced of the necessity of God's pardon, the excellency of Holiness, the reasonableness of virtue, and the necessary connexion which is between goodness and happiness.

2. It consists also in Alteration of Affections; for as he understands things better, so he is otherwise affected towards them: without this the former would be no proof of a sincere change, but a sign of hypocrisie, which a true Penitent doth

Gal. 5.

Eph. 4. 22

doth as passionately desire to throw out of his soul, as he would cast the Devil out of his House, if it were possessed by him. Many Scriptures speak this plain enough, *Those who are Christs, have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts— and have put off the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.* The true Convert hath a *new heart, another spirit*, as it is called *Nam. 14. 24.* The heart of stone is broke in pieces, and being cast away, one of flesh is put in the room of it; which is easily known, for by its softness it receives impressions from those things which before wrought nothing upon it. The Iron sinew is broken, and the stiff neck made plia-

pliable, stoops to the yoke of Christ. Self-will is denied, and uncontrolled appetite passeth into a state of mortification; the same mind beginning to be in the Convert which was in Christ Jesus; he says with him, *Not my will, O Father, but thine be done*: That which pleaseth thee shall please me. Greedy desire ceaseth, Covetousness languishes, Pride is melted down into Humility, *Feroculum illud & petulcum animal cicuratur*, Insolence and abusive temper is alter'd into sweetness and respect, Goatish lasciviousness is changed into chastity of disposition, Revenge turned into Forgiveness, Malice into Charity.

F

He

He which has repented sincerely, will by this find his conversion not to be a vain pretense, because he perceives Religion to have passed into his Nature, and the Gospel become a principle of new life in his soul, and that by the sincere entertainment of it there he contrarily says of himself, I am not I; *Ego non sum ille Ego*, I am not that I which I was before: He is another man, a new Creature, a man now after Gods Heart: He is now a Sacrifice acceptable to God, because he is salted with fire, that is, the vigour of the holy Gospel hath eaten out the Impurity of his Affections, and like a Divine Salt dried up those corruptions which putrifie the soul.

2. The

2. The sincerity of Repentance declares it self in outward expressions agreeable to the inward change, and makes the course of life answerable to the temper of heart. The Scripture tells us of *newness of life* as well as of the *new man*. The Baptist told his Profelytes this same thing, when he bad them *bring forth fruits meet for Repentance*; *Mat. 3.* that is, to do works agreeable to the nature of the thing it self and the profession of it. The sincere Penitent brings forth such fruits, as demonstrate the Doctrines of the Gospel like living Roots to have been implanted in his heart; *i. e.* he performs such actions as flow properly from vertuous Dispositions and Habits. This

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Gal. 5. 25.

the Apostle told the *Galatians* in other words, *If you live in the Spirit, walk in the Spirit— If you live—* i. e. have made the truth of the Gospel the principle of your life—*walk in the Spirit*; i. e. live according to them, and let the power of heavenly Doctrine shine forth in the beauty of holy Conversation. The Penitent now acknowledges Christ for his Master; but to little purpose, except he do what he commands him.

Without a true change of soul a man pretending to some acts of Religion, is like a dead Tree, unto which some branches of Fruit are tied; and if he pretend to have a living Root, but brings not forth answerable fruits, he may make a plau-

plausible show, because possibly adorn'd with green leaves; but the Tree is such as our Saviour will cut down, and cast out of his Garden. Our Saviour hath given but one Rule, and they will do foolishly that go about to make another to know the goodness of a Tree by, and that is the fruit of it; *For a good Tree bringeth forth good fruits.* Matt. 7: 16. He doth not say that the Tree which is bad now, may not be made good, and then bring forth good fruits, for that it may; but that so long as it brings forth corrupt fruits it is bad. Most are ready to allow this Rule when they make a Judgment of others; but doth it not hold as well when they apply it to themselves? Yes; and therefore

1 Joh. 3.
 7. St. John said well, *Little Children,*
let no man deceive you : he that doth
righteousness is righteous, even as he
is righteous. Let no man deceive
you— Why, were any in danger in
 that point? Yes, many did then,
 as they do still, flatter themselves
 that a good heart to God, as they
 call it, and some certain desire of
 living well, will be sufficient to their
 Salvation: No, saith the Apostle,
He that doth righteousness, is righte-
ous: He that will be accepted of
 God must do righteousness, pre-
 sent to God an obedient Faith, by
 which of old, as the Author to
 the Hebrews tells us, *they wrought*
 1 Joh. 3. 29. *righteousness : as he, that is Christ,*
was righteous, and so was accepted
 of his Father; because, as he said
 him-

himself, *He always did those things which pleased him.* He who vwill assure himself of his sincerity, must make no new Rules to judge of it, but keep true to the old one, and not rest satisfied that he knows his Duty, and approves of the Divine Will, or that he hath some desires to be obedient ; No, he must truly perform the actions vvhich agree vvith Gospel Principles and Lavvs, still remembering that of our Saviour, vvho is also our Judge, *If you know these things, happy are you if you do them.* 7^h. 13.
17.

3. When you have got so far, and find the state of your soul right in the forementioned Particulars, then remember that you must make your conformity to the aforesaid

Rules universal, and your Obedience uniform to all the parts of the Gospel. If your Obedience be partial, you vwill find nothing vvithin or vvithout that vwill keep you from being at a loss, as to the proof of your sincerity. If it be necessary to forsake sin, it is necessary to forsake all sin.

Ps. 119. 18

v. 6.

It vvas the Prayer of the Psalmist, *That he might be found in Gods Statutes, and so not be ashamed.* Howv did he hope to attain this? He tells us, *Then shall I not be ashamed,* then I shall be found, vvhen *I have respect to all thy Commandments.* Then I shall have confidence that I am a sincere Servant of God, vvhen I indulge no sin, vvhen I devote my soul to entire Obedience, and
knowv.

knowingly disregard no Law of his.

This cannot be more clearly represented, than by that vvhich St. James hath said concerning this matter, *Whoſoever ſhall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one point, is guilty of all.* James 2.
10. If any ſay, Howv can vve keep the vvhole, and fail in part, vvhen the vvhole includes all the parts? They may eaſily perceive that the Apoſtle means, Whoſoever keeps the greater part, and fails in ſome particular, diſobeys ſome Lawv of Chriſt, is guilty of all; by ſinuing vvilfully againſt one, he is guilty of all; *i. e.* he vvvhich ſincerely reſpects the Authority of the Lawv-giver, vvill ſhovv it in obedience to his vvhole Lawv; for
he

he vvhich flights it in one, is guilty of the breach of the rest, inasmuch as he contemns the Authority vvhich gave them all. That this is his meaning vve are taught by verse 11. vvhich says thus, *For he which said, Do not commit Adultery, said also, do not kill: Now if thou commit no Adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a Transgressor of the Law; and so art guilty of the breach of all, i.e. shall be as liable to Condemnation, as if thou hadst sinned against all: Neither shall Obedience performed to some Lavvs save thee from the punishment vvhich is due to the breach of others. He vvhich serves a Prince in many things, and yet offends against some Capital Lavv, vvill not find*

find his partial obedience save him from the sentence of punishment which shall be passed upon him for that.

To this I may add that excellent saying of our Saviour to the Pharisees, when they pretended to be worthy of acceptance, because they had been very observant of some things, though they neglected others; How! saith our Saviour, *These indeed you ought to have done, no doubt of it; but also you ought not to have left the other undone.* And since they pretended

Luk. 11.
42.

to obedience, for all this, *Fools that you are,* saith our Saviour, *did not he which made that which is without, make that which is within?* You pretend to please God with obedience,

v. 40.

dience, you should do so ; for he is the supream Law-giver ; What then, will you do it with partial obedience ? Doth he expect that all his Laws should be obey'd, or doth he give you leave to pick and chuse ? Did not God, the great Former of all things , who made the inside and outside, expect that you should be pure in soul and body ? Do you think that external washings purifie the soul ? You are as foolish in these thoughts, as he should be who thinks a Cup is clean, when only the outside is washed. Will any man drink in such a Cup ? You please God indeed with your Obedience , when by sinning in some thing or other you plainly affront him. He which
thinks

thinks to be accepted of God for that partial regard shew'd to some of his Precepts, when he flights others, can no more obtain it, than a Lutonist can give content to such as have Musical ears, when some Strings of the Instrument upon which he plays are out of Tune.

4. Sincerity must continue to approve it self such by perseverance.

This I shall explain as I find it expressed in two or three places of Sripture: — *I will hear*

what God will speak to his servants, Ps. 85. 8.
v. 7.
begging mercy of him: and what doth

he say? *He will speak peace to his people,* he will receive their prayers, and pardon their sins, if they repent sincerely of them: — *but*

let them not return to folly — This he requires

requires as a Condition of their Forgiveness, that they do *not return to folly*, which I have sufficiently demonstrated sin to be; they must not relapse into their former courses, which if they should, they will add to their former sottishness, and instead of approving themselves sincere Penitents, show that they are most stupid Fools and vile Hypocrites.

Joh. 5.
14.

When our Saviour healed the Paralytick; he bad him *sin no more*; and knowing by his Divine Wisdom what he had done 38 years before, which occasioned his weakness, bad him take heed of doing any such thing again; assuring him, if he did, that he should be worse punished, as a Contemner of
of

of the pardon now bestowed. So when the same merciful Jesus forgave a very bad woman a sin great enough, he dismissed her not carelessly, but with this severe Injunction added, That she should make her Repentance sincere by *sinning no more*. He did not say, Go, go, thy Accusers are as bad as thy self, live as thou wilt, I accept thy Repentance, I will save thee from punishment now and hereafter : No ; but charged her to be sincere in her Repentance ; and as a Testimony of it, to *sin no more*. By these Instances we may see what our Saviour takes for a proof of sincerity, and it seems that he expects it of all ; for he prescribed the same method, without alteration, to both.

A

Joh. 8. 11.

A sincere Penitent is one that knows sin to be so base a thing, that nothing but Infinite Goodness can forgive it; and is so sensible of the vile stain which it leaves upon his soul, that he would, if he could, wash it off with Tears of Blood; and can he easily go and commit it again? He is convinced that the same wickedness and danger is in it, though set off with an agreeable Temptation, as was before in it, when his Conscience was gall'd with reflexion upon the commission of it; and knows that he hath as much need to sin no more, after he hath repented of it, as he had to vow he would not when he did repent. Can Damnation be made plausible in any dress? Will any
man

man drink Poison, because he sees it sweetned with a great quantity of Sugar ?

The ancient Fathers in their pious Discourses concerning Repentance did usually inveigh against those which they called ἐπαλληλοι καὶ συνεχῆς μετάνοια and rejected those Penitents, who sinning and repenting, but repenting and sinning still, checked their life all along with one and the other ; and affirm'd, that such Converts differ'd nothing from lame Unbelievers, except in this, that those false Penitents knew they sinn'd , and so were worse; and pronounced peremptorily that those who sinned, pretended to be sorry, but sinned still, had only a vain show

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of

of Repentance; and that the true Penitent had such a sense of the nature of sin, that he abhor'd to commit it any more. The Author to the *Hebrews* calls it *Repentance from dead works*; of which words what St. *Chrysostom* said is a very good Exposition, He which repents *ὅτι ἐπὶ τῷ αὐτῷ ἀπὸ θανάτου πᾶσι μαρτύρων ἐφ' οἷς μετενόησεν.* *Lactantius lib. 6.* said, *That to repent is to profess and affirm that we will sin no more.*

Ecclesi.

34. 25,

26.

The Son of *Sirach* tells us what sense of old the Church of God had concerning the contrary sort of Repentance, in these words, *If a man wash himself from the dead, and toucheth it again, what good shall that washing do him?* The Jews having touched

touched any dead body, were unclean by the Law given *Num.19.11.* and they were commanded to take it off by *water of Purification*, as it is called; but if they had washed, and touched it again, what good would that washing do? So he *that repents and fasts too*, as they did in the days of solemn Humiliation, and then goes *and does the same things again, who will hear his prayer? and what good shall his humiliation do him?* He which bewails what is passed, and hath no care to mend for future, deplores his sin, and commits it again, is like one who washeth an unburnt Brick, the more water he pours on the fowler it is. It was the saying of an ancient Writer, and what he said

2 Pet 2.
21, 22.

was warranted by one ancients than he, St. Peter, who in his second Epistle hath defined, that it is *better never to have known the way of Righteousness, which is the Gospel, than having known it to turn from it.* And he there compares that Repentance, which keeps not a man from returning to sin, to the *Dogs returning to his Vomit, and the washed Sows tumbling again in the next mire.*

I shall close this with those words *Joh. 8. 31.* of our Saviour, which he spake to such as believed on him, that they might assure themselves, and not mistake for what they saw in themselves at present—*If you continue in my words, i.e. the obedience of my Doctrine, you shall be my Disciples indeed.*

IF

If that which hath been said concerning Sincerity happen to raise doubts in any soul concerning his estate, and he begins to say, That either the Conditions of Salvation are very hard, or I am no true Christian. I must answer, That if those things which I have said were not true, Christs Gospel would not be that which it most certainly is, the Mystery of Godliness, *i. e.* the Doctrine of Holiness; and that it cannot be denied, but that Christ doth accept his Servants to mercy, though they do not perform perfect unsinning Obedience: therefore I would speak something more to determine this matter, so as not to encourage Hypocrisie, which is confessedly the

worst of sins, nor yet to discourage any that is sincere, because he is not perfect. Therefore I will shew what God requires of us, and what he will account sincerity. I will give the Measures of it in five Particulars, which I will endeavour to adjust according to the standard of the Sanctuary, the Infallible Rule, which is the Word of God.

1. The Gospel requires great honesty of Intention, and simplicity of heart in our Return to God. So the Prophet of his Penitents, *I will be their God, for they shall return to me with their whole heart*, having taken it quite off from their former Idolatries, and the Indulgence which they had for their old

old sins. It was said of the Tribe of *Zabulon*, who came to restore *David* to his Throne, that they were *not of a double heart*; pretending outwardly great love to *David*, but hankering in their minds to the House of *Saul*. Just as the Israelites set their faces towards the Holy Land, and journeyed towards it, but in their hearts turned back to *Egypt*. They kept the steme of the *Flesh-pots* in their phansies, and had the rellish of the *Onions* in their memories, and long'd after them; and so went not toward the promised Land with a full heart, but would have been glad of an opportunity to have return'd to *Egypt*. So I remember the *Philistines* Cows went when they car-

I Chron.
12. 33.

ried the Ark to *Bethshemesb*; they went, but they loved as they went, and had more mind to return to their Calves, than to go forward. Singleness of heart is necessary for all who come unto God; and therefore the Son of *Syrach* warned all such to take heed of approaching him *with a double heart*: Which counsel St. *James* repeats, *Draw nigh to God*, but first *purifie your hearts, you double minded*, whose Souls are partly for God, partly for Sin; which the Author to the *Hebrews* calls *drawing near with true heart*, purg'd from all Hypocrisie, because *the God with whom we have to do, loves Truth in the inward parts*, and can take no pleasure in such as are double minded, *i. e.* fluctuate
be-

Ecclef.
1.28.

James. 4.8.

Hebr. 10.
22.

between a pretence of being virtuous, and a Law of sin, called *halting between two opinions*; leaning one while one way, and one while another, as those who halt do. It was not a *piece*, but *all*, which was meant in that Demand, *My Son give me thy heart*; for so our Saviour inculcating a Rule long before given, says, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart*, with thy whole heart. The contrary is so odious to God, that he declared plainly that he hated the Jews aforementioned, because their *heart was not whole with him*; they did not follow him fully, as was said of *Jos-
shuah*, who had *another spirit*, but *turn'd aside like a deceitful bow*; you may as well make a crooked Bow,
carry

Nam. 14.
24.

carry an Arrow directly to the Mark, as present any thing acceptable to God with a false heart. Therefore our Lord in his excellent Parable of the Sower hath told us plainly, that his Gospel will grow in no soyl, but *a good and honest heart*. So St. Paul told the *Corinthians*, that they could present no fruit as an acceptable Sacrifice to God, except with *unleavened bread of sincerity*; for Hypocrisie sour's the person and his actions.

The true Convert endeavours to bring himself to that pass, that he can say truly, He loves God above all things; which cannot be, if he retain still the love of any sin in his soul. That man is just as
re-

religious as the *Assyrian Samaritans*, mention'd 2 *King*. 17. 33. who blending their *Heathen Ceremonies* with Jewish Rites, made a Mungrel Worship, and serv'd the Lord and their own God's too. They did not know that the Law given was, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* It was good counsel of the old Philosopher, ἅπλωστον σεαυτὸν, Be one thing, deal plainly with God. Dost thou pretend to make over thy soul to God by a Deed, and art so weak as not to know that it will be abhor'd, when thou hast spoil'd the Grant which preserves, and maim'd it with a power of Revocation? Deal fairly; *God will not be mocked.* The true Penitent must bid an E-
ternal

ternal farewell to all his former sins, and that he may practise them no more, must cut off all affection to every sinful way ; as the wise General, when he had landed his men in the Country which he designed to Conquer, burnt the Ships which brought him thither, that so his Souldiers might not upon occasion think of a cowardly return.

Luke 9.
62.

Our Saviour hath declared, That he who *puts his hand to the heavenly Plough*, and doth not renounce what may make him *look back*, is *not fit for the Kingdom of God*. He which holds the Plough, and often looks back, will make mad work on't ; his Furrows will be all crooked. When the same our Saviour bids us, *Remember Lot's wife*,
he

Luke 17.
32.

he signified to us plainly enough, that such as have forsaken *Sodom* and their sins, must not look back with hankering eyes upon them.

If thy heart be sincere with God, thou mayest do well to express it to God upon thy knees in some such words as these are, O Lord, I have sinned against thee, but I repent, and thou understandest the depth of my heart, and knowest that I repent truly. Thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. In thy sacred presence I make my Vow that I will obey thee. I will observe the Rules of my Nature so far, as by them I am taught what my Duty is: and where they fail, I will read carefully thy Gospel, and
what

what I find there to be thy Will , shall be to me an indispensable Law. I make this solemn protestation, that I will harbour no Enemy of thine in my soul ; and lest any thing lurk there which may displease thee , let me know my heart by thy Instruction , and I will cast it out. I desire to be in thy sight an *Israelite indeed*, and pray that I may inherit the blessing which thou bestowest upon those *in whose spirit is no guile*. This is well expressed in that holy Prayer which *David* made in these words, *Try me, O God, and seek the ground of my heart ; prove me, and examine my thoughts ; look well if there be any way of wickedness in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*

Ps. 139.
23, 24.

2. Ho-

2. Honest Intention must be perfected with firm Resolution and fixed purpose of soul; and that must be formed and settled by serious deliberation, that is, due consideration of those things which are the matter of Obedience, and also the difficulties which may occur in the doing them. He which undertakes the business of Religion thus, will find in a little time that he needed to have his Resolution so grounded. Our Saviour in several of his excellent Discourses hath taught us this; let us consider some of them: *If any man will come after me, that is, to be my Disciple, let him deny himself; he must think now of renouncing all self-will, and resigning himself whol-*

*Matt. 16.
24.*

wholly to my Discipline, and take my yoke upon his Neck, yield himself wholly to be governed by my Gospel. And lest we should be mistaken, and so fly off afterward, our Saviour hath in that told us plainly what we must be, *viz. Godly, Righteous, Sober, Chast, Humble, Charitable, Patient*; and hath shewn us fully what the work of his Servants is. Have you considered these things? Yes; He requires nothing but what is exceeding good; I cannot be happy except I be such a person as his Gospel requires. So far it is well, but this is not all; for our Saviour adds, That he *must take up his Cross and follow him*; *i. e.* he must not only be willing to compose his
tem-

temper and life according to our Saviour's Doctrine and Example, he must also be prepar'd to bear patiently these Afflictions, which may happen to him only for being Christ's Disciple.

This our Saviour declared in his general Discourses, and also when any particular persons came to be Profelytes, he dealt plainly with them; and that they might be fully informed, and follow him upon good grounds, he acquainted them with what they might expect in his service. A certain Scribe, struck with admiration of his Miracles, and thereupon possibly expecting that in a while such a Person would make his Disciples great, professed that he *would follow*

*Matt. 8.
19, 20.*

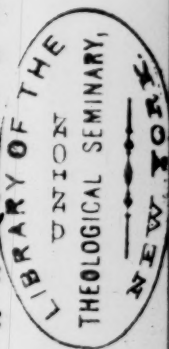
H — low

low him wheresoever he went. Our Saviour, to see if this forward Man had any worthy Resolutions in him, told him how mean his worldly condition was, in that *the Foxes have holes in Earth, and Birds have nests in Trees, but the Son of Man hath not*, as it happened to divers of his Servants, *any certain Habitation*: No House of his own for himself, much less to entertain his followers. He bad him think of this, and then resolve what to do.

For the fuller Explication of this matter concerning the right forming of Christian Resolution, let us read that Discourse which our Saviour made to a great Multitude, when he was giving them
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his Divine Instruction touching this affair : He which will be my Disciple, must not only embrace my Doctrine ; but must make account that possibly many things will fall out to him for his profession and practise of my Religion , which will not be very pleasing to flesh and blood ; he may perchance offend not only his Neighbours , but his Parents, and and make Enemies to him of his best Friends ; may endanger the losing of his Liberty, and after that his Life ; and yet for all this he must not forsake my service : For if any man come unto me , and doth not hate his Father , Mother, Wife, and Children , and Brethren and Sisters , yea and his own Life, cannot

Luke 14.
26, 27,
&c.



be my Disciple. Which words cannot be understood properly ; for it is impious to hate our Parents and other Relations , and absurd to hate ones self ; but he means , and other Scriptures teach us so , that we must love all persons and things less than our Saviour ; and that will appear, when we suffer none of them to make us desert the Obedience which we have promised him. *And he that doth not take up his Cross, and come after me, &c.* Not that Persecutions do always follow the profession of Christian Religion; or that any man is bound upon the undertaking of it, to abandon all he hath in the World ; not that we should presently do it because we are Christians, but that
we

we should be prepar'd to do it, preferring our Saviour before all things, and being resolv'd to part with all, rather than break our Faith given to him.

To illustrate further what he said concerning this way of forming a Resolution, our Saviour adds two Comparisons, taken from the Rules which men follow in building Houses and making War. If any man think of raising a House, he must cast up what it will cost him, both for Materials and Work; and if he begin to build, being either not provided for so much Charge, or not willing to lay it out, he will leave off in the middle of an imperfect Design, and be laughed at for a foolish Un-

dertaking: Or if a man go to War, he will consult with himself whether he hath Supplies enough for his Expedition, and Forces sufficient to fight his Adversary; else he will think it better to keep Peace if he have it, or send Ambassadors for it upon as good Conditions as he can get. So in this Spiritual building or warfare, for in divers respects Religion may be compared to both, we must be at much cost, a great deal must be laid out, and the Enemy which we have to oppose will bring much Force against us; therefore we must prepare before hand, by considering what we will do when it comes to the push, and bear the Crosses which we may meet, and fol-

follow Christ notwithstanding any inconvenience which may happen to us for so doing. He which frames his Resolution so, will not be surpris'd, *i. e.* have his heart infeebled with sudden Assaults; he foresaw^t what would come: neither will he be weakned by the Conflict, he prepared himself for the Incounter before hand. The wise Son of *Syrach* understood this well when he said, *My son, if thou comest to serve the Lord, prepare thy soul for tentation*; which must be done by planting a firm Resolution of Obedience in the bottom of our hearts. Our Saviour hath given the reason of this in the Parable of the Sower, where he tells us of many that may receive the Seed,

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that

that is the Doctrine of his Gospel, into their hearts with joy, and it may seem to grow and flourish in their life, and yet it shall wither in the time of Tentation, because *it wanted root, had not depth of earth and moisture*, as the Evangelists phrase it differently, but meaning the same thing, *i. e.* a well fixed Resolution will maintain future Obedience, as Corn is nourished and supported by sufficiency of moisture, which it receives from a sound root fixed deep in a moist ground, and by that enabled to bring its fruit to perfection.

The Hypocrite and sincere Christian considered together in this matter, seem to me to be well represented by *Orphanah* and *Ruth*,
when

when they began a Journey with *Naomi* their Mother in Law, pretending that they would accompany her from the Land of *Moab* to her own Country — They both set out with great forwardness ; but when *Naomi* told them what small expectation of worldly advantage they could have in her, *Orphanah's* love began to vanish, and extended only a farewell kiss ; but *Ruth* having heard the worst of it, would not be so shaken off — I perceive how it is, but my Resolution continues firm for all that, — *wherefore thou goest I will go; and nothing but death shall part thee and me.* So the true Christian to our Saviour, I will follow thee, O Lamb of God, wherever thou goest: I do not bargain

gain with thee for small way and fair weather; nothing but death, no nor death it self shall part thee and me : As thy love to me , O Jesus, was stronger than death, so shall mine be to thee. Neither things present nor things to come, nor life nor death could separate St. *Paul* from the Love of Christ.

Thus a Christian doth become stedfastly minded , or as in the Hebrew , strengthens himself in his Resolution, exhorting himself, as the Apostle did the *Antiochians*,
 Act. 11. 23. to cleave to God with purpose of heart. He did not make them believe that they should not suffer much inconvenience if they did so: No ; for he told them, as others, that they must through many Tribulations enter
 into

into the Kingdom of God , but that they should resolve to suffer hardship as good Souldiers of Jesus Christ, as he told Timothy , and gave him for a pattern his own purpose, with which he was well acquainted , which was to serve Christ his Master, though he knew how many and how great Afflictions awaited him continually in all places for so doing.

If any say , It is necessary to form a strong Resolution ; but will such thoughts as those do it ? will the fore-consideration of mischiefs prepare us against them ? Men by foreseeing evils that may happen , do excite themselves to take care to avoid them by steering a Course contrary to that which may lead upon

upon them. To this I answer, That considering before hand what Inconveniencies may happen to us in a matter undertaken upon weighty Reasons, will make them hurt us less when we meet them : but that is not all which I meant as to this Method of forming our Resolution ; for that we must add the strengthening of Faith in our souls, that we may have a firm belief of these things which the Gospel hath propounded to encourage us to undertake the Obedience of it, notwithstanding all discouragements, and that is the great Reward which shall be given to obedient Souls. When our Saviour told such as came to him, that possibly they might *lose Father, Mother, Lands, Life,*
for

for his sake, it had been a very poor Motive to make them embrace his Doctrine if he had said no more ; but he added, that such as did so should have *an hundred fold more*, that is, more true satisfaction in what they did, than they could have had in any other way in this life, and *in the world to come life everlasting*, or eternal happiness.

Now that he who purposes to obey Christ's Gospel sincerely must fortifie his Resolution with the strength of Faith, is well expressed by an Apostle who had Experience in this matter : The Devil was in the world like a *roaring Lyon, seeking whom he might devour*, and would, if he could, by Persecution destroy Christianity, whom

1 Pet. 5.
9, 10.

whom resist, being stedfast in the Faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your Brethren who are in the world. But the God of all Grace, the most merciful God, who hath called us to eternal Glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. By what? another Apostle tells us, by the στερεώματι τῆς πίστεως; or as v. 7. *stablished in or by Faith*, by which you are fixed to your Saviour, as a Tree is to a strong Root, or a House to a deep Foundation, for he useth both Metaphors. Our Saviour hath made no new Methods since, and therefore every sincere Christian must make use of this in the forming of his Resolution, and in
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Col. 2. 5.

so doing he may say thus to himself—O my Soul, thou art now setting upon a course of holy Life according to the Precepts of thy Saviour, be real and make thy purpose strong, saying with that holy man, I have fully purposed to offend no more, I will serve thee with my whole soul from the bottom of my heart; I make a Resignation of my self to thy will, and bind my self by a firm Vow, the strongest Bond I can find, that I will keep thy Commandments; and when the Enemy of my soul shall tell me that thus I shall miss the pleasure of sin, I will tell him, I know it, and that they are but for a season, and to be despised in comparison of the favour of God,
and

and joy of doing what we should; and when he adds that probably I shall suffer in this way many things not very pleasing to the flesh, I will tell him, that whatsoever they are I reckon them unworthy to be compared to the reward of Obedience; and when he frights me with the austerity of a strict life, I will tell him, that excellent things have difficulty, and ask him, if he have not in his Ramblings observed the careful observances of a Wrestler or Racer, how punctually they keep themselves to strict methods of preparation for their Conflict, when all that they hoped for was but a Crown of fading Leaves; and is it irrational for me to do all I can
for

for an eternal Crown ? When he bids me look upon those multitudes of suffering Christians, whom Religion brought into misery, in which they perished, I will tell him that I will *follow their Faith, considering the end of their Conversation*, the happy close of their holy Lives, which remov'd them into the regions of endless Bliss, and thither I will follow them. And if he say, But he whom you call Saviour was crucified. Yes I will Answer, and died and was buried, but he rose from the dead, and ascended into Heaven, and bade me follow him ; and because I hope ere long to be with him, I will keep in my way, which will certainly bring me unto him.

I

3. To

3. To these two we must add a careful use of those means which are appointed to make us such as we are commanded to be ; Christ never intended his Gospel for idle souls, *i. e.* such as will take no pains to be saved, who will not carefully endeavour to be made good. They are not for Christ, those delicate persons who cannot endure to think of working out their *salvation with fear and trembling*, nor will hear of giving diligence to be found of God in peace. Our Saviour hath told us expressly, Luk 12.
47. that he will condemn that Servant, who did not prepare himself to do his Masters Will, either in the day time being girt fit for any service, and being ready with lighted Candles

dles to expect his Master when he comes home at night.

A negligent Temper is odious in this business.

1. Because it is trifling in a matter of greatest Importance.
2. Because it is fordid, and would serve the great and good God with that which costs it nothing.

1. This Temper is far from that which should be in a sincere Christian, if it be liable to the said Reproaches, as indeed it is. That man whom sin hath made sick, and will not carefully use the means appointed for his recovery, either

understands not his danger, or supposeth the method prescribed for the cure of his Disease not necessary, or will not be at the trouble of undertaking such things as are requisite to his recovery, and rather than do so, will remain in his sin, that is, die of his sickness; What prudent Physician would meddle with such a Patient? It may be the sick Hypocrite would do some little things, when such as are very great are necessary for his health. This is well expressed in that smart Letter which *Diogenes* wrote to *Dionysius*, when some vain Philosophers flattered him in his great Vices: *Alas! man*, said *Diogenes*, *thy Diseases are such that they need cuttings and burnings; but*
thou

thou hast got together a few Dissemblers, which say to thee as fond Grandmothers and Nurses do to sick Children,

Δέξαυ τέκνον, ἔλχεαυ ἔτι με φιλεῖς,
μικρὸν ἔτι, μόνον τὸ πρὸς φραγε,

i. e. Take this my Child, pour it in, if you love me do, a little more, eat but this small bit. Triflers! The

Children are extream sick, and must be made to take their Physick, or die. The sincere Christian knows that our necessitous condition requires a great care for the repair of it; that the Gospel which we are to obey is a Law of great Holiness, and hath in it many Commandements, requires obedience in thought, temper, and action; yes, and that with resistance of many Temptations, strong, because

agreeable to our natural Appetites, which will mak our work to go on sometimes like that of the Waterman , when he hales his Boat against the Stream— And we shall find hinderances from infirmity of Flesh, and inconstancy of Spirit, distractions of our Senses and many wild Phanfies, besides the malice of a watchful Devil. By this the Penitent sees what need he hath of great care in the use of all means, which may carry him on in his course; and he says, Since my Saviour hath showed me the value of my Soul, that it is of more worth than the acquist of all the pleasures in the World for my whole Life , and hath in great kindness told me how I may save it, I will
care-

carefully keep to his methods, knowing, that if I use not the means given me for the avoiding of sin, I shall be both guilty of the sin I commit, and of negligence in not endeavouring to prevent it, and so draw upon my self foolishly a double curse. He hath called me to the heavenly Journey, and I will undertake it. It is an easie thing to take a Map and travel over a great part of the World by the Eye; but he that will arrive at a Country far distant from his own, must go over many craggy Hills, pass through many deep ways, and cross rough Seas before he can get thither; he that will not begin his Journey except it be made as easie to be performed, as

to be looked over in a Map, doth plainly shew that he did never heartily, or else most foolishly, design it. He which hath a Watch in his Pocket may expect that it should tell him the hours of the Day, but not unless he skrew the Spring to a just strength, and wind it up at due seasons. God hath put a Divine Principle like a Spring of holy Life in our Souls, and it will shew its force in us by making us feel in our selves a strong propension to God, and an inclination to all goodness; but we must wind it up daily, and strengthen it with such Meditations and Prayers as may keep it in vigor. Of what life is a Watch, when the Spring is spoiled or unbent? Divine
vine

vine Grace is like sparks of Fire hid in the Soul, but we must blow them up, as the Apostles word is (ἀναζωπυρεῖν) the Fire will go out, which is not maintained with proper fewel, and the Spirit may be quenched.

2 Tim. 1.
6.

1 Thess. 5.
19.

2. The forementioned Temper is rejected by the sincere Christian; because it is sordid, and would serve the great and good God with that which costs little or nothing. He that would do as little as he can in Gods service, hath but mean thoughts of that great God with whom he hath to do, and understands not the greatness of that reward which God hath in his infinite goodness promised to such as serve him sincerely ; or is so base, that

that however he will do no more than pleaseth himself in point of Obedience. If this Christian had been a Jew, you should have seen him go to his Fold, and there seek up and down till he had found out a sheep, either lame, or such as had but one eye, if none were quite blind, and that he would have gone and offered for a Sacrifice: but God did then, and doth still abhor that vile Temper. It's true, God is so good, that in some cases he doth *accept the Will for the Deed*, when it is impossible to be performed: but when the Case is otherwise, we shall forfeit our sincerity, and for not preparing our selves to do our Master's Will be beaten with many stripes. God
is

is so gracious, that he hath mercy upon our Ignorance , and pities our invincible infirmities, and forgives that sin which we could not possibly or probably avoid , and he helps our weaknesse: but still requires that we should always stand upon our guard, watch always against surprises, as well as abhor voluntary Transgression, desiring and endeavouring nothing so much as to please God; and so much the rather, because we perceive that the Master whom vve serve is so gracious, that he accepts vvhath vve have done heartily and sincerely, though it vvas not the most vve could have done, nor done in the best manner that possibly vve could.

4. Sin-

4. Sincerity also supposeth that vvhich Christ vvill require in every true Disciple of his, a good attainment, a competent proficiency in the state of Vertue. It vv ere a mean business, if the sincerity of Christian Religion should be contracted into a few cold Wishes, and the attainment of its Professors, should not exceed the faint *Wouldings* of Hypocrites ; especially since the Christian Religion is the most Noble in its Design, and vvorks vvith the highest Principles, and yet improve the progress of its Disciples but into such a motion as a Door hath upon the Hinges, and so leave them in the sad condition of those Hypocrites vvhom the Apostle reproacheth,

proacheth, *who were always learning,* ^{2 Tim. 3. 7.}
but never came to the knowledge of
the Truth; vvhho vvhere alvvays
learning, came to those places
vvhere the Gospel vvvas taught, but
vvwere never able to come to expe-
rience the Truth of it in them-
selves. What vvvas the Reason?
Because they gave heed to the He-
retical Doctrine of some seducing
Teachers, and so nourished their
Hypocrisie in Errour; but if they
had received the Truth of the Go-
spel in the love of it, and resign'd
themselves to the government of it
vvith sincerity, it would have made
them another kind of people. For
this hear our Saviour — You shall ^{Joh. 8. 32}
know the Truth, and the Truth shall
make you free — If you receive my
Go-

Gospel vvith sincere Faith, it vvill shovv it self in its effects upon you, it vvill make you free. From vvhat? from the slavery of sin, from all habitual sin, and also from the acts of gross sins, every one of vvhich is damnable; Which, as *Tertullian* said, a Child of God cannot do, or must cease to be the Child of God if he do them, as Murder, Adultery, Perjury, Idolatry, &c. And if the true Penitent have been formerly given to any sin, he vvill forsake that too :
Pf. 18. 23. So *David*, *I kept me from mine Iniquity* : yes, vvhen he had repented; and if he had not, he could not have had any testimony of sincerity. The attainment of a sincere Christian is to have goodness ha-

habitual to the soul, to be pleased
vvith doing his Duty. For this
see 1 *John* 5. 3. *This is the love of
God, that we keep his Commandments,
and his Commandments are not grie-
vous. For whosoever is born of God
overcometh the World; and this is
the victory that overcometh the World,
even our Faith.* The sincere Chri-
stian shovvs his Love in Obedi-
ence, and not only so, but delights
to do his Duty. *God's Commands
are not grievous, i. e. as our Savi-
our said before, his yoke is easie,
and his burden is light; and being
born of God, he overcometh the
World by the Spirit of Faith
vvhich is in him, vvhich is stron-
ger than the Spirit that is in the
World.*

This

This our Saviour expects , as we see in the promise vvhich he made after his Ascension *to him that overcometh*: not to him vvhich fights only ; no, but *to him that overcometh* ; and this he might vvell do , because he gave power not only to *fight*, but to *overcome* ; and said long before, that *to whom much is given , of them more shall be required* , that is ; such improvement as may answer the bestowing.

When our Saviour compared himself to a Vine, and his Servants to the Branches of it, supposing that he gave them sufficient vital Iuyce for the purpose, he told them that they were to *glorifie his Father by bringing forth much fruit,*

3. b. 15. 8.

fruit, and then they should be, and appear plainly to be *his Disciples*. By which it is manifest, that our great Shepherd would have his Flock to be such Sheep as those which *Epietetus* mentions, who were not to bring their Hay and Grass and lay it before their Shepherds, to let them see how much they had eaten; but having well digested their Food, were to bring it forth in Milk and Wool, and so to approve themselves to him who fed them. So sincere Christians are not to declare what they are in words or profession, much less in vain ostentation, or to make excuses for what they are not; but having concocted our Saviour's Doctrine in their souls, do as St.

K

James

James teacheth, Shew out of a good conversation their works with meekness of wisdom.

Here i think it not unfit to admonish every one, who would have the Testimony of their Conscience concerning their sincerity, that they should take heed of excusing themselves to God, when they are not such as they should be; no, though they may seem to have some places of Scripture on their side. And for this I think it may not be amiss to relate to you, what *St. Chrysostome* told his Church at *Constantinople* upon this occasion ; he had often reprov'd them for going to the Heathen shows, which by their immodesty were offensive to the chaste, and also odious by their cruel

cruel effusion of Humane blood ;
 After this some of his wandering
 Sheep had gone to them again ,
 and when he still continued his
 Reproof, they answered, That tru-
 ly they did what they would not,
 but thought that was no great mat-
 ter, since St. *Paul* made the same
 Defence for himself ; and so they
 were not more to be blamed than
 he, since they disliked what they
 did. This hypocritical pretext
 put the holy man into a fit of pas-
 sionate Zeal, and he fell thus up-
 on them ; *What, says he, do you*
not only serve sin, but abuse the holy
Scripture ? Do you satisfie your lusts,
and then reproach the honour of an
Apostle ? I, I, every one that loves
to sin , desires to find out some excuse,

K 2 which

which might maintain his practise; and now you fall foul upon an Apostle, though I know it is not with an intent to reproach him, but to make an Apology for your selves. Then that they might not think that St. Paul spake those words in that Chapter of himself; but in the person of one in conflict with sin, but at present overcome by it, and being sensible of his Danger, cries out, O miserable man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death? and that St. Paul himself was not now carnal, sold under sin, to obey what it commanded; he adds, Was St. Paul carnal, in whom Christ lived, who was governed by the Holy Ghost, who had Christ always speaking in him? &c. To which one may

may very well add, What, was St. Paul only a Servant of Christ's in Notion of Mind, but not in Obedience of Will, who had served him faithfully so many years, and suffered the loss of all things for him, and was ready to do so again? *Whom the Law of the Spirit of Life had made free from the Law of Sin and Death? who lived, but no longer he, but Christ in him, willing what he would in him, and doing what he would by him; for to him he had resign'd Soul and Body? Strange! Is it the Art of a true Christian to contrive how he may evade his Duty instead of doing it? Will any wise man build the peace of his Conscience, and lay the stress of his hopes upon*

Excuses ? Can any man make us believe that the chief of the Apostles was so dull, as not to see a difference between an Excuse and an Aggravation ? Doth any thing aggravate a sin more than to commit it against ones conscience ? Was this the sincerity of an old Disciple, the attainment of *Paul* the aged ? Had he but so learn'd Christ, or taught him no better ? To excuse himself that he sinned, he did what his Conscience told him he should not have done ? He hath rejected this vile pretence as much as can be in two places, where he speaketh plainly of himself, *I have lived in all good Conscience to this day* ; i. e. according to the Principles of Vertue, which

which he had being a Jew ; and what, did he grow worse afterward? No : for he saith , that having received Christian Principles , he did then , as being more obliged , *exercise himself always to have a Conscience void of offence to God and Man.* It had been a brave Defence (had it not ?) for the Primitive Christians to have told the Heathens according to this interpretation, that they desired to be better than they , but were indeed as bad ; especially since they had received in their Regeneration a power, which enabled them to overcome those sins to which the Heathens were slaves. For so the same Apostle, *Walk in the Spirit* , Gal. 5. 16. *and you shall not fulfil the Lusts of*

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the

the Flesh. Not that he meant dully, if they live in the Spirit, they should not live in the Flesh ; no, but that, if you follow the conduct of the Spirit, you will receive those assistances from it, which shall enable you to overcome those Tentations which Hypocrites pretend as the only Excuses, why they live after the Flesh. But these assistances must be made use of. A man may be overcome of another, not stronger than himself, if he will not use the Arms which he hath to defend himself. It is promised that *if we resist the Devil, he shall fly from us*— But can any man think that if he do not resist the Devil, he will fly from him ? or that his yielding to the Devil will

will be any excuse to him when he is overcome, and made his Slave, when he did not resist him ?

To close this ; since foolish Excuses are useless in these matters, let every sincere Christian say to himself — O my soul, it is time for thee to know what thou hast attained in Christian Religion, to seek a proof of Christ dwelling in thee, and to find a good Evidence of true goodness. What doth all that thou hast done amount to ? Dost thou find in thy self a thankfulness which is in some good measure answerable to the goodness of Christ's Love, and the many Benefits which thou hast received from him ? Hast thou that Reverence towards him which is due to
the

the Dignity of his Person? Is thy Temper conformable to his Gospel, and thy Life to his holy Example? Dost thou only please thy self in the contemplation of Divine Truths, and rest in the speculation of heavenly things? dost thou not also endeavour to find the power of Gospel Motives working in thy soul to the ends for which they were propounded? Dost thou carefully read the holy Gospel, that thou mayest not be ignorant of, or forget any part of thy Duty, and then pray with hearty Devotion for Grace to help thee to obey, and then makest use of what is bestowed, that thou mayest receive more, as need shall require? Dost thou give thy self leave to make Hypocritical

critical Excuses for Disobedience, and pretending that Christ is made Righteousness to us, thinkest that thou mayest indulge some sin in thy self? or rather abhorring that falseness, doest thou endeavour to give Testimony of thy Love to Christ's Person, by obeying his Commands, and seekest Reconciliation with God only upon the terms which he hath appointed? Dost thou find that as the first purposes of thy soul were to obey, so the habitual inclination of thy mind doth propound still the same way, and that the constant workings and daily motions of thy soul are all set for the accomplishment of thy holy purposes? The good man, who finds that it is thus with him,

him, will be conscious to himself of his sincerity to God; the inward sense and feeling of his soul will tell him, that his Conversion is sincere: as a man knows himself to be an honest man, who endeavours in all his actions to keep himself close to the Rules of good Life.

5. To what hath been said I need add no more, but that the sincere Christian makes a daily progress towards the perfection of degrees, *goes on to perfection*, as the Author to the *Hebrews* said. The sincere Christian doth not make it his work vainly to compare himself with others, whose defects he thinks he hath espied, and please himself in what he hath attained, because they are not so good; but hum-

humbly desires by daily endeavors to grow better than himself, and to bring the sincerity of his estate nearer to the perfection of Degrees. He is mindful of the advice given, *to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.* He grows in knowledge, who understands his way to God better and better; for *the light of the Righteous shines more and more to perfect day.* The Traveller that understands his way pretty well, having a great Journey to go, riseth it may be by Moon-light, or takes the first dawns of the Morning for his Guidance; but as the day comes on, he grows more assur'd by the clear light. But he grows in Grace too, *i. e.* he is bettered in soul,

soul, and does his Duty to God better, and rides on more confidently, and with more speed, as the Traveller doth when he hath more light to assure him of his way.

We learn from the Apostles of the Gospel Assistances bringing a
Eph. 4. 13 good Christian εἰς ἄνδρα τέλειον, *to a perfect man, to that measure of stature which is full of Christ; and makes the Christian like a man who is arrived to those years which bestow upon him a great vigor of strength, a firm constitution (κατέργησεν τὸ ἀγίον)*
2 Cor. 13. 9. which the Apostle prayed for the *Corinthians*, which he there calls κατέργησις, consummation in grace, which the *Romans* having obtained, he said of them,
Rom. 15. 14. *that they were full of goodness.* Our
 Sa-

Saviour is said to *have grown* ^{Luke 25. 2.}
in stature of body, in spirit, and in
favour with God and Man, i.e. to have
increased in such Vertues, and a-
bounded in such Actions, as did
exceedingly please God and Man.
 St. *John* calls this *prospering in soul* ^{3 Job. 2.}
 by merciful Additions of grace,
 which he prayed for his Friend
Gaius.

That which a good man should
 endeavour in this matter, St. *Paul*
 hath expressed to the life in his own
 practise, i.e. *I have not yet attained I* ^{Phil. 3. 12, 13, 14.}
am not made perfect, but I follow on,
that I may get to the further end, Christ
leading me by the hand, and helping me
forward, which makes me to forget what
is behind, and to add to what I have
done well, creeping forward, and pres-
sing

sing towards the Mark, that I may not come short of the prize. I will end this Discourse with a short Gloss upon what is said by *David* in a pathetick *Psal*m, who makes mention of the great desire which the *Israelites* had under the *Mosaick* Dispensation to go to *Jerusalem*, that there they might enjoy the presence of God in his Temple; and this passion did so transport them, that they envied the Happiness of Sparrows and Swallows, Birds which had leave to make their nests there; but more admired the felicity of God's Servants who dwelt in that House, enjoying the manifestations of the Divine Presence, and praising God continually for the many and great Mercies which they had

had received from him, and then pronouncing them happy in whose hearts were the ways thither, *i. e.* who set and prepared their minds, resolving to be there, and passing from Valley to Valley (for the Rode lay from Hill to Hill) with unwearied steps travelled till they came to that most desirable place. — This doth every sincere Christian; his aim is at the heavenly *Jerusalem*, *i. e.* the Vision of Peace which is in the presence of God, and he makes all his life one constant Journey thither, and is therefore truly called one of that *Generation of Travellers* who march towards *Sion*, and each day of his life is a step in his way: and though by the common accidents of this

L life

Psal. 24.

life he may be so hindred that he shall slack his pace awhile, and by the slumbers of the Night necessary to refresh his wearied Body, his more active thoughts are laid asleep ; yet the very Night passing on with silent Minutes carries him, as a ship under sail doth the Passenger sleeping in his Cabbin, nearer to his Port , and when he is awake , perceiving that he is still in his way, he goes on rejoicing, and makes what haste he can to come to his Journeys end, the fruition of God in Heaven.

Having shown the Nature of Repentance, I come now to urge the Praîse of it with three Motives, which are these,

1. The

1. The first is taken from the reasonableness of Repentance in its own Nature.
2. The second is that Encouragement which we have to it from the goodness of God, who is willing to forgive the Penitent.
3. The third is taken from the great and inevitable Mischief which awaites Impenitence.

1. It is fit that finners should repent, because sin is the most unnatural thing in the World. The state of sin is a contra-natural Temper, and the actions in which

it expresseth it self, are most unreasonable. When *John* the Baptist was sent before our Saviour to prepare his way, that is, to dispose men for the receiving of his Gospel, which is called *Luke* 1.17. to make a people ready prepared for the Lord, when he begun his work, by turning the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; he was said *Mat.* 17.11. *καὶ ἀναστήσει πάντα*, to restore all things; the word signifies *Reponere in naturæ congruentem statum*, to reduce men into a state agreeable to Nature, which by sin was discomposed. What can be more unnatural, than for the hearts of Fathers to be set against their Children, and for Children to hate their Parents? Out of that unreason-

sonable course of sin he brought them by Repentance into their natural Station.

For the reason aforesaid, sin in Scripture is called *distraktion of mind*; for when the Prodigal Son made sensible of his Error returned to his Duty, he is said, *εἰς ἑαυτὸν ἐλθεῖν*, *to come to himself*; Sin had made him mad. The Prophet *Isaiah* gives notice of the same thing, when he said, *Shew yourselves men, return to your mind, ye Transgressors*. He that sins runs away from God and his own Reason both at once. *Resipiscencia*, the Latin word for Repentance, says the same; for he that Repents doth, as *Lactantius* says, *Mentem quasi ab insaniâ recipere*. St. Paul in the

Luke 15.
17.

Is. 46. 8.

2 *Tim.* 2.
3. second Epistle to *Timothy*, calls it
 'Ανανήφειν, to awake one out
 of a drunken sleep. Those who
 slight the great Reasons of their
 Duties to God, and leave them-
 selves to be hurried on in the
 course of their lives by brutish
 Appetites, act but like men who
 are mad or drunk; and they will
 confess it, if ever they do return
 to a right use of their mind and
 settled thoughts, which he hath
 lost who thinks he may *be* and *do*
 what he will. Nothing but want
 of Reason will make any man pre-
 fer the loose Wit of a mad man,
 and the wild motions of a Luna-
 tick, before the wise thoughts and
 regular actions of sober men. He
 which sins tears all the Obligati-
 ons

ons by which God hath engaged him to Obedience, breaks all the Bonds which his Almighty Creator hath laid upon his Soul, as the Frantick in the Gospel did those which were upon his Body; but he hath another sense of things, and will not do so, when he is restored to a right mind.

It's true, it did not please God at first to make us immutable, yet that we might not fall into Error by sudden Actions, he made us able to deliberate; and since we do nothing so well usually but it may be bettered, and do many things so ill that they ought to be mended, he gave us the power of Animadversion, that by reflecting upon our selves and actions,

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we might correct by after endeavours that which was not so well done at first; and it is most reasonable that we should make use of this power, and fit for the Penitent to say, It was best indeed not to have sinned, but it is next best to repent; and since I cannot recall what is past, yet I will mend it as well as I can, as he said,

Λύσω ὅσ' ἐξήμαρτον ἐν τῷ πρῶτον
χρόνῳ,

I will endeavour to undo what was ill done in my former life. I will, as St. *John* said of our Saviour, Λύσαι ἃ ἡμαρτίαν, do what I can to destroy my sins. Another Penitent said well,

— Τὴν

—Τὴν ἁμαρτίαν
 Ἄιχρὰν ἁμαρτῶν ἀναλαβεῖν πα-
 ρώσωμι.

i. e. having committed a base sin,
 I will endeavour to mend it: Ἀ-
 ναλαβεῖν, among other things, sig-
 nifies to resume a work, to do it
 better, to make up a defect.

A sinner, among other words
 in Scripture, is said ἁμαρτῆν,
 which signifies to miss the mark;
 and therefore he should repent, and
 learn to aim better. Sin, among
 other names, is called Ἀπάτη,
 which signifies a going astray. He
 must needs be out of his way, who
 by sin is departed from the God of
 his life; and therefore he should
 take

take up, as the Apostles advice is,
Act. 20. 21. Repentance towards God; i. e. he
 ought to repent and return to God.
 We have been told, and that truly,
 that Πάσης ἐνζωΐας καὶ τελειώσεως
 ψυχικῆς ἀρχὴ καὶ τέλος ἐστὶν ἡ πρὸς
 τὸν Θεὸν ἀνάστασις, that the begin-
 ning and end of all happy life and
 perfection is the lifting up of our
 souls to God. And by another,
 that man is ἐπιστρέφειν πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν
 πεφυκώς, that a man doth natu-
 rally return to God, and therefore
 if we have by sin gone astray from
 him, and our own Nature, it is
 most reasonable, as his words are,
 Τὴν ἀνωθεν φυγὴν τῇ ἀντιστρόφῳ φυ-
 γῇ ἰᾶσθαι, to repair the mischief
 of our flight from above, from
 God and Vertue, by returning to
 him. To

To show the reasonableness of Repentance a little further, I shall only add two things to be considered, *viz.*

1. That sin is the sickness, deformity, and pain of the soul,
2. That it is a bold contempt of that excellent Order, which the Divine Wisdom hath planted in Humane Nature.

1. Sin is the sickness, deformity, and pain of the soul, and is as destructive of its health, beauty, and safety, as distempered humours, defect in any Member, solution of parts, or dislocation
of

of a Joynt can be to the Body; and if it be not timely cured, will be the death of the Soul. Therefore the recovery of a sinner is expressed in Scripture by words which signifie Restoring of health to a sick Man, the cure of a wound, the Reparation of a decayed or lost Sense, the setting of a dislocated Bone in the right place again, and giving ease to one that is in pain. And there is good Reason for it: For is not an ignorant mind as bad as a blind eye? A will disabled to all virtuous choice worse than a lame hand? And vile affections more ugly than distorted Members? An evil Conscience as afflictive as a Cancer in the Breast? Pining Envy as vexatious as the gnawing

gnawing of the Stomach? Are not the Furies of Lust, and the Rage of Drunkenness or Hellish Malice as unnatural Distempers in the Soul as Feverish heats in the Body? Is not the Soul as much tormented with thinking of the folly of Surfeits, as the Body is afflicted with the bad consequences of them? Is not insatiable desire of worldly Greatness, Riches, and Pleasure, as bad as the Hydropick Thirst?

A man would think himself in a bad Condition, if he should find himself deprived of Sense, deformed in any principal Member, weakned in the powers of his Body, troubled with a deaf Ear, a lame Hand, and gouty Feet, his
Blood

Blood inflamed, and feel himself racked with the pain of the Stone; he would have so little pleasure in himself that he would hate life: But he who is corrupted with sin is in a worse condition, for he hath neither beauty, health, or vigour in his Soul. He is maimed in his excellent Faculties, disabled to the use of his best powers, and hath defaced the beauty of his Soul, which is Vertue. A good man is pleased with himself, because he feels that his soul is in health, and that all his powers are in due symmetry, and finds that in his soul which should make a man in love with himself. He perceives, as *Plato* said, that he is εὐ κενος- μέν & ἰσχυρ, or as his Scholar
Plotin

Plotin expressed it, ἔνδον καλόν, in the Psalmists words, *beautiful within*, that his soul is adorn'd with the παντέλεια τῶν ἀρετῶν, as *Philo* call'd it, with compleat vertue, which is the highest participation of the Divine Nature, by which we are capable to imitate God, which we then do when our souls are enrich'd with the sincere Love of God, true Wisdom, venerable Prudence, exact Justice, Godlike Benignity, generous Courage, lovely Temperance, pure Chastity, discreet Moderation, compos'd Passions; and in short, when we have, as he said, Ἐπιτηδεύματα καλὰ, τρόπος καλὸς καὶ ἡθὴ σώφρονα, καὶ ὅλως ἔργα ἀρετῆς καὶ διαθέσεις, honest Endeavours, good Designs, prudent Con-

Conversation, temperate Manners, and indeed all the Actions and Dispositions of Vertue.

These are the fair Delineations of the Divine Image, and finding those in his soul, a good man is pleased with himself, and desires to be as he is.

But these beautiful Characters of Immortal Spirits are all defac'd by wickedness; and after they are blurr'd, whensoever the sinner is forc'd to hold a Looking-glass before his soul, he throws it away, because he cannot endure to see himself. *Aristotle* said well concerning this, ὅτι δὴ φαίνεσθαι ὁ φαῦλος οὐδὲ πρὸς ἑαυτὸν φιλικῶς ἀγαπεῖσθαι, ἀλλὰ τὸ μηδὲν ἔχον φιλητόν. A bad man hath no love
love

*Arist.ad
Nicom.
l.9.c.4.*

love for himself, because he finds nothing in himself that is worthy to be loved. Much to the same purpose *Philo Jud.* A wicked man hath no joy in himself, after he hath debauched his Nature, and vitiated whatsoever was good in it, Μηδὲν ἔχων χαρᾶς αἰτιον, having now nothing to rejoyce in. And writing upon that Verse in *Genesis*, that after man had perverted his Nature by sin, as a punishment the Earth brought forth for his sake Briers and Thorns, I, saith he, and so did his heart too, it could not do otherwise, adding these words, ἀλλὰ τὶ φυεῖται καὶ βλαστάνει ἐν ἀφρονος ψυχῇ πλὴν ὅρα κεντέρινα καὶ πτερώσκοντα αὐτὴν πᾶσι; i. e. for what else can grow or

M spring

spring upon the soul of a Fool, but such passions as do prick and wound it ?

Besides that which I have said upon this matter, I must add one particular mischief, and that no small one, which will always disturb a sinner, till he return to God by Repentance ; and that is an *evil Conscience*, a Serpent in the Bosome, which hath been well represented in our Saviour's Discourses by a Worm gnawing the Bowels, or as a Rust fretting the heart, a Fire in the Veins. It is a θεῖον κέντρον, as *Euripides* calls it, a Divine Goad sticking in the soul; which the Heathens acknowledged under the name of the *Thestian Vipers*, and the merciless Furies.

Furies. This *Cotta* the Atheist, if we may believe *Tully*, confessed to be a very great vexation without reference to God ; his words are these, *Sine ullà Divina ratione grave ipsius conscientia pondus est.* *De Nat. Dior.* It is as vexatious, as the company of an unpleasant Ghost to such as are haunted by it day and night, who can never be quiet till it be laid.

But when respect is had to God, which it must and will have, for it is his Deputy, the case is much worse ; for it will torment the sinner, both with the sense of his Disfavour, under which it puts him at present , and with the fear of that punishment which it makes him expect in time to come. It is a huge misery to be in such a state

as makes a man afraid of God, which the guilt of sin always doth. This I cannot better say, than in the words of a forementioned Author, who speaking of the sad Condition in which *Adam* was after he had eaten the forbidden Fruit, and upon the sense of his Fault had hidden himself from God, hoping, at least wishing he had done so; when God enquiring after him, though knowing well enough where he was, asked him this Question, *Adam, where art thou?* He makes this Answer for him proper enough — *Ἐγώ εἰμι ὅπου οἱ ἄνθρωποι κρύβονται, &c.* *I am where they are, who are not able to look upon God; where they are, who obey not God. I am where they are, who hide themselves from*

from their Maker ; where they are, who are fled from virtue, and are destitute of wisdom : I am where they are, who tremble by reason of guilt and cowardise.

This being the melancholick condition of wretched sinners, after they come to consider how things are with them in the cool of the day, when the heats of their Wine and Lust are over, their ranting mirth ended, their Passions becalm'd, and they begin to bethink themselves, and to reflect upon their Extravagancies, and are made to hear that still voice which call'd to *Adam* after his prevarication ; Wise men having compared the sprightly, erect, chearful temper of good men with this Law,

M 3 justly

Hier. 177 justly pronounced that vertuous
 persons do not only τῷ καλῷ ᾧ ὡς
 εἶναι ἔ φαύλῳ, ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτῇ τῇ ἡ-
 δοτῇ νικᾶν, δι' ἣν μέντοι δοκεῖ εἰς
 κακίαν ὁ φαύλος ὑπάγεσθαι, i.e. Not
 only exceed a vitious man in that
 which is honest, but also overcome
 him in pleasure, for which only the
 sinner seems to betake himself to wick-
 edness. And this pleasure is so
 considerable, that Aristotle could
 say that it did exceed that of the
 wicked, those Fugitives from Ver-
 tue, Τῇ κατὰ φύσιν καὶ τῷ βεβαίῳ,
 in that it is more pure and more
 solid, and so is, as another calls it,
 ἡδοτὴ ἀμεταμέλητος, such a plea-
 sure as one shall never have cause
 to repent of.

But

But those pains which I fore-mentioned are more considerable, because they are both more pungent and more lasting than those of the Body ; which made *Simplicius* say of them, That they are ὀδυρότεροι τῶν σωματικῶν ηὐλάσεων καὶ κλητηρότεροι, καὶ μᾶλλον ἐκείνων δυσπραγῶνται, *i. e.* that they are more grievous, stay longer, and are harder to be cured. A bodily Distemper is more easily relieved than an evil Conscience : take away the present pain, and the Body returns to its health ; but the soul is pain'd with the remembrance of what is past, and the fear of what is to come, which is so great an affliction, that many times it makes the present state intolerable.

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There-

Therefore Holy Scripture and Ancient Philosophers called the state of Sin the *Death* of the Soul : So our Saviour said of the vitious Prodigal, that he was *dead*; and the Apostle of the wicked world, that they were *dead in sins and trespasses*; and the Heathen Philosopher the same, Θάνατος γὰρ λογικῆς ἐσίας ἀδεία, &c. i. e. *The death of the soul is the deprivation of God and Reason, which are accompanied with a turbulent conflict of inordinate passions.* And that none might think that he dully supposed that an Immortal Being can dy, he adds, ὁ τῇ εἰς τὸ μὴ εἶναι ἐκβάσκει, ἀλλὰ τῇ ὅτι εἶναι ἀποπύσκει, i. e. *Not that they cease to be, but that they fall from the happiness of life.* And in another

ther place he says, that wickedness is the *corruption of an Immortal Being*, φθείρεται ὡς ἐφ' ὅσον οἶόν τε, it corrupts it as much as is possible ; For this reason, when any of *Pythagoras's* Sholars abandoned the practise of Vertue , and left his Society, they hung up a κενοτάφιον, an empty Coffin for him, looking upon him as one dead. And they might very well do so ; for is it not the destruction of a reasonable Being, to be corrupted in those Principles which are essential to it, to be spoiled in its best Faculties, to be hindred from the free exercise of its Natural Powers, to be bereav'd of that joy which a man hath when he acts according to that which is best in him,

him, to be deadned to a vital sense of his chief good , and to be deprived of the love of God, which is the very life of good men? Whatsoever intercepts the favourable Influences of God's Benignity doth as much contribute to the death of the soul, as he would promote the bodie's life, who by some fatal obstruction of the inward passages should hinder the communication of vital Spirits to all the parts of the body. What joy can a man have, when the indwelling God is grieved, and the Fool lives in contradiction to the connate Principles of his soul ?

2. This brings me to the second Demonstration of the Reasonableness of Repentance, because
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fin is an insolent contempt of that excellent order which God hath planted in Humane Nature, which is his Law upon it, and is the ornament and preservation of it.

There are few who have so little use of their soul bestowed upon them, but that they know they are better than their Bodies, and that the Faculties of it do transcend those of the sensual Part; and that the mind doth not only understand what is best, but hath Authority bestowed upon it to govern the bodily Apperites, which being inferiour in Nature, and needing a Guide, ought to receive Law from it.

The

The soul doth discover, being it self taught of God, by its natural light and super-added Revelation, what is the happiness to which it was made, the best good of which it is capable, and shows the means by which it may be attained, directs & assists in the use of them, propounds rational Arguments to persuade to use and persist in the use of them, & can baffle such Objections as are raised, either by the homebred Enemy, or Foreign Tentations, to hinder the soul in its chearful progress towards its Felicity.

The soul tells us what satisfaction is allowable to the bodily appetites, distinguisheth between lawful and unlawful, & utterly forbids the latter, and commands that there be no
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excess in the former , shows what Moderation is, and the benefit of it, and represents the mischief as well as the sin of excess, & threatens death upon the eating of all forbidden Fruit. Order is then observed, as it ought to be, when all the Faculties do obey this Superior, upon whom God hath bestow'd power to discern Freedom of choice, and authority to command. For which reason ancient Philosophers have call'd it by very agreeable Names , as the Τὸ Ἡγεμονικὸν καὶ διύαμις δεσποτική, because it is the part to which is committed the guidance of all the rest. It was called also Ἡνίοχος and Ἐπιβήτωρ, ἐλάττονες ὅ τῆς ψυχῆς διυάμις, ἵπποι, that which rides and governs the lower Faculties,

culties, as the Charioteer doth his Horses with Rains ; because it was placed in man to guide the Affections, and conduct the Faculties of soul and body in what way they should go, and what pace, and to teach them when to rest, and when they went astray to curb their Extravagancies, and to reduce them into the right Path. It is worthy of all reasonable Beings to maintain this Dignity, and it is their Duty to see that it be not trampled upon. This made a great Philosopher say, that when a man is assaulted by any sensual Tentation , he ought *Τὴν λογικὴν δυνάμιν διεγείρειν πρὸς τε τὴν φυλακὴν τῶν οἰκείων ἀξιώματος, καὶ πρὸς τὴν κατὰ φύσιν χρῆσιν τῶν οἰκείων ἐνεργειῶν* — and so
Τὴν

Τὴν δυνάμιν λογικὴν ἀδύλευτον φυλάττειν, *i. e.* to stir up his rational power to defend its proper Dignity, and to secure the exercise of its Faculties according to their proper nature, and so to keep the Reason of his mind from being enslav'd.

Who knows not that the Irascible Faculty which is in us will tempt us, when occasion is offered, to answer Reviling with Reproach, and Wrong with Revenge? but the τὸ θεῖον is able, as *Simplicius* saith, μὴ ἔσθ' ὅτι ἐν ἡμῖν κυνὰ ὑλακτεῖν, not to suffer the Dog which is in us to bark, much less to bite: and to return Good for Evil, both in Words and Actions, Entreating for Rudeness, and for Cursing,

Curſing Prayers. And for the Concupiſcible part, it can deny what it craves, it can reduce the ſenſual Appetite to that order which Nature requires, and bring it into a leſs compaſs than the juſt meaſure of Nature, if it pleaſe: and to ſhow its full Authority over all ſenſual Inclinations and Impreſſions, it can appoint what is contrary to their Tendance, and having reſolved againſt it, can put what it hath decreed in Execution, and ſo though the Inferior part rebel, it ſhows its power, being enabled by God ἀντέχειν καὶ κρατεῖν, to reſtrain it, and maintain its own Superiority.

It's true, bodily Objects preſented by the Senſes will enter into
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the imagination, and by sudden Phantasms make some impression upon the soul, but the mind can cast them out again, can withdraw it self from the consideration of them, can presently think upon other things, and as it pleaseth deliberate whether that which the flesh desires be fit to be granted or no; and if it be not, can reject it; and not only refuse to do that which would gratifie the sensual part, but the quite contrary.

St. James says that *Lust, when it hath conceived, bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.* Jam. 1. 15 Tentations to sin are presented; if the Will embrace them, Lust conceives; and if it goes on to action it brings forth death: but

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if

if a man reject the Allurement, and deny the consent of his Will, and refuse to act according to the incitations of fleshly Appetites, the Cockatrice is killed in the shell, and so cannot live to bite and hurt.

Thus we are secure in the Observation of God's Order, which if we neglect, the mischief of our disregard will soon appear in the ill Consequences which attend it: For God hath so framed the Nature of our Souls, and so ordered our most important Concerns, that we can never break his Order but we shall suffer for it. What we neglect at present will meet us in bad effects afterward. When a man hath slighted the Govern-
ment

ment of himself, and laid the Rains upon the neck of the Beast, he shall soon find himself serv'd by his unruly Passions, as *Hippolytus* was by his Horses, *thrown* and *torn*. Philosophers called inordinate Appetite *πελυκίφαλον θηρίον*, a Beast with many Heads. It is bad enough to contest with one Beast; but it is much more hazardous, when a man must scuffle with many. To this dangerous Combat a sinner condemns himself: When he hath parted with his Reason, he hath subjected his mind to the command of every insulcing Appetite, and must comply with every foolish Phansie: Being made the slave of sin, he must, as the Apostle says, serve divers Lusts, and so must

needs be in a brave condition, being under the Arbitrary Command not of one Tyrannical Patron, but many, having indeed as many Lords as Lusts; and how basely they use their vitious slaves, commanding by turns, the poor wretches feel to their grief, by the perpetual disturbance which they receive from them; being sometimes more then half drowned with Wine, sometimes set on fire with Wrath, at other times swelled till they are ready to break with Pride, and often thrown into all dirty pleasures.

I am not ignorant that some hardned sinners say, That they feel not the pains of sin which are so talked of, neither are they much
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concerned, though they break that precise order which is forementioned : They are well pleased with the life of Sense, and are willing to go as their Appetites lead them ; they esteem that order good enough which some call Hurry ; though they be censured, yet they think themselves well paid for what they do with fleshly Divertisements ; and whatever Divines or Philosophers say to the contrary, they see no cause to repent of their course.

To these men I shall only say two things ;

1. That it is no sign of health in a man to want feeling.

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2. That

2. That there are Monsters in the World, but no Argument can be made from them against Nature.

1. It is no sign of health in a man to want feeling. Is a man to be accounted well, because he is in an Apoplexie, and so not sensible of what you say or do to him? Doth any man reckon it a perfection in his body to want feeling or any other sense? The soul hath its Apoplexie too. A man may so debauch his Nature with vitious practises, that at last he shall be past feeling, and commit all filthiness with greediness, as the Apostle saith. He sins, and pleaseth himself that he feels no remorse;
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Is glad that he is lifted in the number of those ἀπηλθόντες. He become a whining Penitent ? No, he is one of the *Fortes Esprites* : He makes a mock of sin. Tell him of Repentance? tell them that are weary of their lives, he is well enough. Let the sick send for the Physician out of his Bed : He may sleep long enough for him, he needs him not. Its ridiculous talk to speak to him of a spiritual Guide, he can govern himself.

This seems to be well ; but the Friends of a sick person are much troubled, when they perceive that he is not sensible of pain or danger, and they take it for a sign of approaching death ; neither do they entertain any hope of life, till

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they have brought him to a sense of his sickness & weakness. The Scripture tells us of a *seared Conscience*, & of such whose minds are darkned, and of a reprobate mind, an undiscerning soul, and of a hardned heart as callous as a Labourer's hand, and of a heart waxen gross, that is, a soul which hath no more sense of God, than the fat heart of an Ox, which in other places is called the *spirit of slumber*; nothing can awake such a person to mind his most important concerns. A wicked life benums a sinner, and we are no more to regard his judgment of things, than what a blind man says of colours. A reprobate mind is that sad punishment which God doth often inflict upon wilful sinners.

ners. Since we know this, we need not wonder that they do not repent, though their Condition be most dangerous; for they understand it not.

2. There are Monsters in the World, but no Argument can be taken from them against Nature, Will any body say that all should be as they are? Shall Error be set for a Rule? If one be born deformed, or wanting some of those integral parts which make up a Body, would any that is in his Wits be willing to be conform'd to that unnatural Idea? If a man had a Child born defective in any Limb, blind, lame, or any way mishapen; would he not think it a great favour, if it might be granted

granted to him, to have this Child born again in a handſom form, and reſtored to a beautiful proportion? Wiſe men have ever thought, that it is a greater monſtroſity to be miſhapen in Soul; the Mind corrupted, the Affections corrupted with Luſt, and ſo made diſhonourable to the ſtate of Human Nature. The Holy Scripture doth very juſtly call this a Corruption of Human Nature; for every thing deſerves that name, when it hath loſt that power which is the proper Excellency of its Nature, and by which it is fitted to its End. This Degeneracy is ſo great, that the Holy Scripture ſaith, Men are degraded by it into the condition of brute Beaſts, 2 *Pet.* 2. 12. and in other

2 Tim. 3. 9*Eph.* 4. 22*Rom.* 1.

other places. The Philosophers saw it by the Light of Nature, and have spoken more highly in the case : *Arrian* calls them ἐν ζώοις *Arrian. l. 1. c. 3.* ἀτυχίματά, i. e. the most unhappy among Beasts —and adds, that if there be any thing ἀτυχέστερον καὶ ἄπαιότερον, more wretched and abject, a man depraved with sin is that. The Poets meant the same when they spoke of the Transformation of *Ulysses* his Companions, who by Debauchery were turned into Swine, grunting in *Circe's* Prison, and there thrusting out their Snouts through the Grates in which they were kept Slaves. So monstrous is the state of the Soul, when it is made to truckle under every ungoverned Passion.

Se-

Second Motive.

This is enough to have shown the reasonableness of Repentance ; and I might now add the danger which a sinner incurs by Impenitence ; for he makes himself liable to that Vengeance, which God will take for the contempt of his Orders. But before I speak of that, I shall discourse of my second Motive to Repentance, which is taken from the Goodness of God who is willing to forgive the Penitent sinner ; and that is so great an Encouragement to this Duty ,

Rom. 2.4. that the Apostle says *it leads us to Repentance.* That it doth so, will be seen plainly in the Account which

which I shall give of it in fix Particulars.

1. The first Encouragement is that Declaration which God hath made concerning his own Nature, that it is not implacable; but that he is willing to forgive those who have sinned, if they repent of their sins. This Goodness of the Divine Nature God made to pass before *Moses*, when he desired to see the the glory of the Godhead, when God proclaimed himself to be *the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity transgression and sin.* This glorious Name was given, as that by which God was willing to be

Exod.
34, 5, 6.

be known to the World; and it doth give us notice of that which doth most concern us to know of the Deity.

God by his Royal Prerogative hath power to forgive, if he please. By right of Creation he is the Sovereign Rector of the World. He who made all things, must need have authority to give them Law; it is fit that all Creatures should obey him who gave them their Being. As he hath power to give Law; so also to threaten in case of Disobedience, and so he only is *Dominus pœnarum*: the punishment of sin is solely at his appointment; for whatsoever mischief sin may do in the Consequences of it to others, it is his Law which is violated by it,

it, it is his Authority which is affronted.

But as God hath only right to punish; so, if he please, it is his Prerogative not to punish. His Threatnings are Conditional, and so in themselves capable of Relaxation. He may depart from his Right, if he will, and forgive us what we are not able to pay. He may pass by those wrongs for which we can never make him amends, as indeed we cannot for one Sin; For, as *Daniel* said, *To the Lord our God belong Mercies and Forgiveness, though we have rebelled against him.* As it his Royal Prerogative, that he can forgive; so it is his Divine Benignity, that he is willing to do it. The goodness of

Dan. 9. 9.

of God, for which we constantly adore him, is a voluntary propension of the Divine Nature to do good to his Creatures according to their several Capacities; and he hath a particular Love to Mankind, which makes him willing to promote their Happiness; and as sin is the only hindrance of that, he hath declared his love by his willingness to prevent the mischievous effects of it by forgiveness. Here the Divine goodness doth magnifie it self against our wickedness, the Divine Wisdom finds a way to save the Offender from the ruin of his own Folly, and God's Justice shows it self wise and good, not reaching after that satisfaction which cannot

cannot be had, to wit, not requiring that the Offence be undone, for that cannot be; nor yet seeking the utmost which may be had, which is, that the sinner be destroyed; but is content with such a Reparation as may be made of the Divine Honour by Repentance, by which sin is extirpated, and the sinner saved.

I have spoken of this Particular more largely, to fix a right Notion of the temper of the Deity in mens Souls. It is no small comfort to us that we know God is not necessitated to execute his Threatnings, and that he is of so Benign a Nature, that he is willing to part with his Right, rather than ruin his Creatures.

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This

Micah. 7.
18.

This is a mighty Encouragement to Repentance, and should make every sinner say, as the Prophet did, *Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his Heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.* Art thou so good, though I have been so bad? I will rebel no more; I hope in thy Mercy, I will return.

1 Kings
20.30.

We read that *Benhadad* and his great Army invaded *Israel*; and when they were beaten, the very Report that the Kings of *Israel* were merciful, made them come with Sackcloth upon their Loyns, and Ropes about their Necks, suing for Pardon with all the signs of Pe-

Penitence and Submission. We are told also in the Story of *Augustus Cæsar*, That there was one *Corocotta*, a *Spanish* Thief, so famous for doing Mischief, that the Emperor promised Tenthousand *Sesterces* to him that should bring him alive into his presence. Here upon *Corocotta* fearing his danger if he continued his Course, and having heard of the generous temper of *Augustus*, carried himself to him. It could not be the hope of the price set upon his head that could make him do so; for what pleasure can a man take in telling money, when he is going to be hanged? but the hope of Pardon, which he obtained, and by the Nobleness of *Cæsar*, the money too.

O 2 Sure

Eph. 2.4.

Sure the Report which we have heard of God, that he *is rich in Mercy*, should encourage us to bring the Penitent Rebel into his presence, and throw him prostrate before his Footstool. The Throne is a Seat of Grace, and the King who sits upon it is the Father of Mercies. If we repent we may come boldly, and have a good hope to find favour.

Princes do invite rebellious Subjects many times to lay down their Arms by offering Acts of Oblivion, and it usually prevails; but however it may be the Wisdom as well as Clemency of Princes, to offer pardon, because they know no better way to overcome sturdy Rebels: But the Argument is

is more cogent to make sinners repent, when God offers pardon, because he is Almighty, & so needs no Arts to reduce the Obstinate; he can destroy them when he pleaseth; what he offers is mere Grace; he would not have them perish through their foolish wilfulness: would he not? O then, Rebel Heart, wilt thou not ἀνισχυεῖν πρὸς Θεόν, as *Clem. Alexandr.* says, wilt thou not run away from thy disobedient Party? If thou hadst been shut up in Despair, as the Devils are, imprison'd and made to know that thou wert reserved in Chains without hope, till the Judgment of the great Day, thou mightest have some colour for the hardness of thy heart; but now,

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when Grace is not denied, if thou repentest not thou wilt have nothing to say for thy self.

2. Especially since God hath assured thee by an Oath, That he *delights not in the death of sinners*, nor is pleased with the ruin of such as have rebelled against him. *As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.* According to that of *2 Pet. 3. 9.* St. Peter, He is *not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance* : And that of St. *1 Tim. 2. 4.* Paul, He *would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth.*

It's true, the Heathens painted the Godhead after a wild sort, making

king their Pagods in dismal shapes of grim Monsters, armed with Claws and Teeth; Pictures not unfit to represent those Devils whom they worshipped. Who having shown their Enmity to God in making his Creatures Idolaters, declared also their Malice to Men, by making Cruelty a great part of their Worship: not only whilst they forced them to tear their Skin with their Nails, and cut their Flesh with Knives, as the Worshippers of *Baal* did, of whom we read 1 *Kings* 18. 28. and as other Idolaters did, of whom we read in Heathen Authors; but made them sacrifice their Sons and Daughters to Devils: or as in the next Verse, to the Idols of *Canaan*, in whom they

Ps. 106.

v. 32.

were worshipped, and whose bloody Rites they appointed : They made their Children pass through the Fire to *Moloch* ; whether they made them perish miserably in the hollow breast of a burning Image, or drew them so long between two Fires that they died, the Cruelty was so great, that they were fain to stifle the sound of their dreadful Shrieks with the noise of Drums. This was the sense and practise of the Eastern World ; and the West was not unlike to it, for to one Idol of *America*, *Vitzliputli*, they offered in some solemn Sacrifices many thousands of Men and Women flay'd alive, their breasts being cut open, and their warm hearts taken out and presented to the bloody

bloody Idol. How far our God is from that temper, he hath sufficiently declared, since instead of making us all dreadful Examples of just Vengeance in our own persons, he gave his own dear Son to die for us.

That blessed Son was of the same temper too, as you may see in that part of his Story which is recorded *Luke. 18. 41.* in which we are told of his approach to *Jerusalem*, not long before his death, where foreseeing that great Change, which for their sins their then flourishing Estate should in a short time suffer, it is said, *he wept over it. Wept over it?* They had given him cause to *insult* over them, they were as bad as sinners could be. They
had

had rejected him the Messiah, the great promise of God to their Nation, who came to them according to all the prefigurations and predictions which were given to their Fathers: they acknowledged Miracles to be a sufficient Testimony of God's mind, and yet disbelieved him who gave them that proof: they scorned the Doctrine of perfect Goodness which he taught, and yet confessed, that *never man spake as he spake*: they despised the unparalleled Example of all Vertues which he gave in his life, and put him to death who had done them all the good he could whilst he lived—yet knowing that for these things in a while they should be punished with inexpressible Miseries,

ries, the foresight made his tears fall from his eyes ; and to these he added his blood , for he died for those who killed him, and joyned his Prayers to it for the pardon of such as had made him as miserable as they could. After this how can any sinner be afraid of God, if he repent?

3. The third Enconragement is, That God hath by all manner of Invitations called sinners to Repentance. The Scripture abounds with frequent Exhortations to this Duty , and Declarations of God's desire of mens Return ; sometimes it records his Expostulations with the Obstinate, whom he also beseecheth by his Servants, and sometimes bad them in his Name

Name to command finners to save themselves this way.

Exhortations we find often in the Sermons of the Prophets, whom he sent of old, rising early, and sitting up late, to warn finners of their danger, and charged the blood of such as perished upon them, if they did not do it. This was the first Sermon of our Saviour's Forerunner, and his own, *Repent, and believe the Gospel.*

How desirous God was always of this in his Creatures, these, among many other Expressions, give witness—*Ob that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, that it might be well with them! O that they were wise, that they would understand! O that my people had hearkened*

Matth. 3.

Mark 1.

*Deut. 5.
29.*

32.29.

*Psal. 81.
31.*

hearkened to me ! O that thou hadst Luke 19.
42.
known in this thy day the things which
belong unto thy peace ! He expostu-
lates with them, Why will ye die ? Ez. k. 18.
31.
 and by his Servants beseecheth
 them— *We are Ambassadors for* 2 Cor. 5.
20.
Christ, as though God did beseech
you by us, We pray you in Christ's
stead, be ye reconciled to God. And
he commands all men every where A. B. 17.
30.
to repent.

4. To perfect this Encourage-
 ment, he hath assured pardon to
 the Penitent by many plain Pro-
 mises, in which God's goodness
 is obliged by his Truth; which
 being made, the Apostle said well,
 that now, *God is faithful and just to*
forgive sinners. The Benignity of
 the Divine Nature is a good en-
 cou-

couragement; but when that hath declared it self in particular promises ensured by God's Veracity, we have firm grounds of Hope, plain measures of Expectation, and he which doth not give credit unto them, *makes God a lyar*, as St. *John* says; puts the same contempt upon God which men do upon the words of vain persons, who never mean what they say, or are unable to perform what they promise. Without this Revelation a Heathen could say, *Qui desperat Deum exasperat, nec bonum credit*, i.e. He which despairs makes God angry, and doth not believe him to be good. After all this wilt thou not repent?

Petron.

5. Espe-

5: Especially when God hath given a mighty Demonstration of his full purpose to fulfil what he hath promised to penitent sinners, not only declaring these Promises by his dear son, but by making him

1. A Sacrifice of Expiation for sinners in his Death, and
2. Also an Advocate for them since his Resurrection.

1. God hath made him a Sacrifice of Expiation in his Death. An Expiatory Sacrifice is when one suffers for another, and so saves the other from suffering ; when
Body

Body is given for Body, Life for Life. Such was our Saviour's Passion for sinners : And therefore the Apostle said, *He gave himself* Ἀντίλυτρον ὡς ᾧ πάντων, *a ransom for all men* ; Or as our Saviour said himself, Λύτρον, *a Ransom for many*. He gave his Life as such a price, by which Captives or Slaves are set at Liberty ; and therefore he is said to have *redeemed us from the Curse, being made a Curse for us* : Ἐξηρέασε, He bought us off with a great price from the Curse due to our sins, being himself content to be used for our sakes as one who is accursed. What worse things could happen to any mortal man, than those which Christ suffered ? His Death was esteemed by

by all men as the most infamous and most painful, and was looked upon by the Eternal Father as the common Penance of Mankind, for whom he suffered it.

Thus our Saviour became our *Ἀντίψυχος*, gave his life for ours; and we Eph. 1. 7. have (*ἀπολύτρωσις*) *Redemption* through his blood, the forgiveness of our sins; Yes, through his blood: For he nail'd our Bond to his Cross, and so Col. 3. 12. cancel'd it, and freed us from our Debt. Thus hath God been willing to let us know, how unwilling he is to punish us if we repent. Though it be of the nature of punishment that it be inflicted for sin, yet it is not necessary that it should be upon the person offending, if the offended will accept of another to

P
suffer

suffer for him, and so free him. This is our Case; for God was pleased to accept of the Temporal Death of his dear Son, to free all penitent sinners from Death Eternal.

2. I need not prosecute this comfortable Argument any further; God hath by it abundantly signified his mind to relieve trembling sinners, having made his Son a Propitiation for them in his Death, and declared also that he is an Advocate for them since his Resurrection. *If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father.* Παράκλησις in this place signifies one who deprecates Anger, mitigates Wrath, begs pardon for such as have offended. The Design of the

the Gospel is to preserve us from sin; but if one chance to fall into sin, lest he sin also into Despair, it gives this encouragement to rise by Repentance, because we have an Advocate with the Father, the Son of God, who intercedes for us, pleads our cause in Heaven. This Encouragement is great upon many accounts;

1. Because long before his Incarnation he was designed to that merciful Office by the Eternal Father: So we read in *Isaiab* Is. 53. 12. (which the Evangelist *Mark* applies to our Saviour) *He shall make Intercession for Transgressors*, deprecate the Divine Anger for them, appear in the presence of God for them. It is a great satisfaction

faction to all thoughtful minds,
 that they are assured of the truth of
 his Commission : We are ignorant
 upon what grounds some have be-
 stowed this part of his Mediation
 upon Saints or Angels. The Scrip-
Jf. 63. 16. ture hath told us that *Abraham*
knows us not, and that Israel is ig-
norant of us, and that no man taketh
to him the honour of mediating for o-
thers with God, but he that is called
of God. But we have great hope
Heb. 5. 4. in this one Mediator, because God
 hath given him the honour to stand
 at his Right Hand, and plead for
 sinners. He is the great *Angelus*
Orationis, as I think *Tertullian* cal-
 led him ; who, when the prayers
 of Saints goes up to Heaven, puts
 in his Merits to make them accep-
 table.

table. As for others, alas , poor Souls! they have no merits to make their own Prayers sweet, and how then shall they perfume those of others?

2. This our Advocate was always, and is the most beloved Son of God. He dwelt eternally in the Bosom of the Father ; a phrase which signifies Intimacy and Love. He is one to whom the Father never denied any thing : so he said himself, *I know that thou bearest me always.*

3. It is a great Encouragement that we have such an Advocate , who by his Death merited a just Right to intercede with God for sinners. He might well pray for pardon, who offered himself a

Sacrifice of Expiation, and demand the Release of Captives for whom he had paid the Ransom.

We are not to think that in Heaven our Saviour prays for sinners, offering up cries with tears for them; but intercedes with the Authority of Mediation, which he obtained by his Death. He appears in the presence of God for us, offering great Reasons for our pardon.

4. To this add, that he hath, whilst he doth this, strong desires in himself to have us made partakers of it. We are told that he is a merciful High Priest in things pertaining to God; and that he is willing to make Reconciliation for us: not like the Masters of Requests

quests in this World, who many times are so hard to come at, that it is easier to get a Petition granted by the King, than presented by his Servant. No; he is so merciful, that he hath bid us come boldly to the Throne of Grace, and to be confident that we shall obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need; we may come μετὰ παρρησίας, freely declare our case to God, have free access to him for that purpose, and we shall not be turned away with shame, as people are when their Petitions are slighted.

Heb. 4. 16.

1 Joh. 2. 18.

This goodness of our Saviour's Temper is an inward Advocate for us, always dwelling in his Breast, making him willing to receive the

P 4

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*Matt. 26.
40, 41.*

Petitions which we offer to him , and also to present them to the Eternal Father, and to add to them what may make them acceptable. He show'd his benign Disposition before he left this World , in that kind Excuse which he made for the neglect of his Friends , who failed him in a time when he much needed their Service. For though he reprov'd them for their fault — *What? could you not watch with me one hour in this my great Agony?* yet he mercifully both told them their Danger, and how to avoid it, and made some Excuse for them, saying, *The Spirit is willing, but the Flesh weak.* Besides this, he plainly showed his good Temper, when upon the Cross he deprecated the
Ven.

Vengeance of the Eternal Father ,
and prayed it might not fall upon
such as had sufficiently deserved
it. These Considerations do give
vast encouragement to sinners to
repent, since by them they see how
easily they may come to Mer-
cy.

To which I shall only add one
more, which is, That God hath
declared himself highly pleased
when sinners do repent, and ac-
cept of his pardon. For this take
our Saviour's word, *I say unto you,* Luke 15.
10.
*that there is great joy in the presence
of the Angels of God over one sinner
that repenteth.* This our Saviour
further expresth in the Parable of
the Prodigal, which follows in the
same Chapter; for when he came
back

back from his vicious Course, it is said there, That *his Father*, when he was afar off, had compassion on him, ran to meet him, fell on his Neck and kissed him, that is, gave him all signs of Reconciliation, & expressed all decent Joy for his Return, in killing the *fatted Calf* to make him a Feast, and adding Musick and Dancing to make it pleasant. Though these things are spoken ἀνθρώπου πατρὸς • yet we think worthily and rightly of God, when by such Expressions we understand how acceptable our Repentance is to him, and by that are moved to repent.

And now upon the forementioned Considerations, how can the sinner but fall upon his knees, and say?

say? O Lord, I am sensible of my folly, I am pain'd with my guilt; I am so obnoxious to thy wrath, that if thou shouldst mark my sin in order to punishment, I know I should not be able to abide it; but I see *there is mercy with thee that thou mayst be feared*; thy *goodness leads me to Repentance*, and I will follow its gentle conduct, and return to thee: And thus I make my Prayer; O Lord, though I most justly deserve to be condemned, yet I beseech thee not to condemn me. What profit is there in my Blood? Behold, I offer thee for my Ransom a better Life than my own, that of thy dear Son: and since thou didst commend thy Love to mankind, that he should
die

die for finners ; O grant me part in that Love. Since thou wast pleased to make to meet upon him the Iniquities of us all , lay mine upon him I beseech thee. It is easier for thee to pardon my sins , than to have given thy dear Son to be a Sacrifice for them. He hath more pleased thee by his Obedience, than I have grieved thee by my Disobedience. The voice of his Blood cries lowder for pardon, than my sins for vengeance. Since thy beloved Son died for our sins, and rose again for our justification ; since thou hast reconciled me to thee by his death, now much more let me be saved by his life.

And,

And, O blessed Jesus, since thou didst not refuse to die for my sins, I pray thee that I may not die for them too. After thy Incarnation thou didst declare that thou camest not to be ministred unto, but to serve others, and (O unexpressible kindness!) to give thy life a Ransom for many; it is sufficient for the sins of all the World; leave not mine out I beseech thee, but let me be one of the Redeemed made happy by thee, because thou madest thy Soul an Offering for their sins. Thou wast pleased, among thy Titles of Glory, to take this of a Saviour; and as thou didst not then despise that merciful Office, so neither art thou yet weary of it; Save me, even
me

me also, I pray thee, and say unto my Soul, that thou art my salvation. It is long ago that thou didst call to thee all such as are *weary and heavy laden*, I am one of those, O Lord, my sins ly heavy upon me like a load of Sand, and without thy help the Burden will grow intolerable ; I beseech thee, according to thy gracious promise, to take it off and give me ease, *O Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the World.*

Thou wast pleased in the days of thy Flesh to pity the miseries of finners ; Thy Compassion is not withered ; thy pity is not dried up, it extends it self from Generation to Generation ; thou shewest mercy to thousands, and lavest

to

to the utmost of all times all that come unto God by thee : I come unto the Eternal Father hoping in thy mediation; save me I beseech thee, O Prince of pity.

Thou didst command thy Servants to preach Repentance and Remission of sins in thy Name, and didst pray for such as should believe in thee through their Word ; I am one of those, most merciful Jesus, let the benefit of thy prayer reach me also. Thou undertookst to make Intercession for sinners, and didst beg their Release, as well thou mightest , for thou didst pay their Debt; O pray for me also, most merciful Advocate. When thou wentest into thy Glory , thou didst not
leave

leave the Remembrance of poor Souls behind thee, but didst let them know before thy departure hence, that thou wast going to appear in the presence of God for them; remember me too now thou art in thy Kingdom, O Lover of Souls, who ever livest to make Intercession.

Before I proceed to the last Motive, lest the former should miss their desired Effect, I will stay here, and briefly answer two Objections, which without any just ground some have made to their own hinderance in this Affair.

I. One saith, That notwithstanding all which hath been discoursed concerning the goodness of God, yet I do not know whether

ther he intends any kindness towards me in his Declarations, because he may by some secret will have debarred me from having any benefit by them.

2. Another saith, It may be God would pardon me if I did repent; but what am I better for that, since I find in my self no power to repent?

1. To the first; After all that full Declaration which God hath made of his goodness, dost thou doubt his Reality? And though he hath affirmed his readiness to save, dost thou think that by some hidden Will he hath resolved thy Damnation? Let me then say to thee, in the words of a late Divine of this Church—*O thou Hypocrite!*

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because thou hast two wills, one in thy Words, and another in thy mind, dost thou think that God hath so too? that he speaks one thing, and means another? That he hath a secret will contradictory to his revealed? If it be secret, how camest thou to know it? No; thou art wicked in making God a liar and dissembler like thy self. So he. I will add, That such blasphemous words, without Repentance, will be severely accounted for one day; and that God will reprove thee, and set this, among thy other sins, in order before thee. Leave of these vile Imaginations, and never let it enter into thy mind to think, that God hath declared one thing to men in his Word, and hath decreed another
con-

concerning them in himself. He is the God of Truth; and therefore repent, and trust in his mercy.

2. To the other, Who says he would, but hath no power to Repent, and so looks upon the goodness of God in forgiving the Penitent as not available to him, I answer; That it is true, since our fall we cannot return to God by our own weak power; but that is no Excuse for Impenitence, because God is ready to supply that Defect with the Assistance of his Grace. God was pleased to Act. 5. 31. make his dear Son a Saviour to give repentance and remission of sins; not only to pardon sinners upon their repentance, but to give

Q 2 them

them grace to enable them to repent, and so obtain pardon. This grace may be had for asking —

Luke 11.
13. *He will give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him.* It is the good pleasure of him who hath commanded us to will and do what we ought,

Phil. 2. to enable us to will and do what we ought.

This assistance of the Divine grace I shall express in *St. Augustine's* words, *Non in eo divinitus adjuvamus ad operandam justitiam, quod Legem Deus dedit plenam bonis præceptis; sed quod ipsa voluntas nostra, sine qua operari bonum non possumus, adjuvatur & erigitur impartito Spiritu Gratiæ; i.e. we are not divinely assisted to the working of Righteousness in this, that God hath*

given

given us a Law full of good Precepts; but because our Will, without which we cannot do good, is helpt and erected by the Spirit of grace bestowed upon us.

It is a great favour, that God hath been pleased to give us his Gospel, which St. *Paul* calls *χάρις σωτήριος*, saving grace; It shows the way of Salvation to us: by it we are made to understand the most important concerns of our souls; that shows us the gracious conditions of our pardon, and lays before us strong Reasons to convince us of the necessity of our compliance with what God hath propounded, if we will be happy, and demonstrates the reasonableness of Obedience. But God is

Q 3

pleased

pleased also to invigorate his Gospel Methods with the gracious Operation of his benign Spirit, which makes a Divine Light shine into the Mind, clears up the mist of Ignorance which lay upon it before, and makes us know the things which belong to our peace; awakens our Consciences, and makes us apprehensive of the danger of sin, and affrights us with the truth of Divine Threatnings; makes us consider heavenly Motives, opens
 Act. 15. 14 our hearts, as it did *Lydia's*, to attend to the things which are spoken to us, and inclines us to comply with the reason of them; it raiseth our wills out of sloth and languor by a secret ardor of life conveyed into our Souls, λόγοις
 οἷς

οἷς οἶδε Θεός, by ways which God knows, as *St. Basil* saith, and so puts into our minds good Desires, and makes us begin to feel in our Souls a hunger after Righteousness; it melts us with the Love of God and his dear Son, makes us ashamed to sin any more, and comforts us with the hope of Pardon and Restoration to the Divine Favour, and so conjures us by potent Arguments to enter into the Bands of the Covenant, and persuades us to submit thankfully to the terms of the Gospel.

Thus our blessed Saviour stands at the Door and knocks; thus the heavenly Father draws us to his Son: and the sinner should say—
I find the gracious Spirit of God

Q 4

leading

Rev. 3.
20.
Jo. 6.44

leading me towards the Land of the Living. I will resign my self to his Conduct, I will be led by him, I will *follow the Lamb wheresoever he goes*. Doth my Saviour vouchsafe to knock at my Door? I am infinitely beholden to him, I will open to him, I will let him in, and give him the possession of my Soul.

This is the Divine grace, and it is our Duty to make a careful use of it; and then we shall have more to help us to perfect what is well begun. A ready compliance with such merciful Assistance is highly requisite; for if we resist God's kind Motions, and slight the help bestowed, we may frustrate the design of his Mercy against

gainst our selves, and make that grace ineffectual which would have saved us, if we had improved it with our concurrent endeavours.

We must not expect that God should pull us out of a state of sin, and drag us into a state of vertue by an irresistible force: God is pleased in Conversion to draw us towards himself by the Cords of a Man, by such Arguments as we understand to be most reasonable, and by such Motives as are apt to perswade such as will consider, and by the gentle Swasions of his good Spirit, with the Cords of Love, and the Bands of Kindness. We must not think that God should act upon us to the extent of his Omnipotence,
but

but according to his Wisdom. He knows what help is sufficient for us, and how fit it is that we should thankfully use what is enough, without asking what is too much. He takes what method he pleaseth in the dispensing of his grace, which we are not to appoint, but observe. Our Duty is to accept of sufficient grace, and use it, that we may be converted, and not teach God how to convert us.

God was always displeased with men, when neglecting the kindness which he showed them, they would prescribe him methods for the communication of his goodness.

When

When the Israelites were led Pf. 78. 41. through the Wilderness, they were well enough provided for by God's care, and should have been not only content, but thankful: they were neither; but lothing the Bread of Heaven, which God had appointed for them, they would have Quails. They had them; but they had better have been without them: for God was angry at their rude unthankfulness — For the limited the Holy One of *Israel*. They would not only be provided for, but in such a way as they themselves should describe.

We have a very good account of this matter in that excellent Parable of *Isaiah*, where God speaking of the Jewish people, whom he Isa. 5. calls

calls his Vineyard, saith, That he planted it in a fat Soyl, hedged it, that is, guarded it with his Providence, set a Vine which was generous, gave them excellent Laws, the teachings of inspired men, and the assistances of his grace, and all sufficient means to promote their bringing forth Fruit answerable to his Care : But after all, instead of good Grapes, they brought forth wild Grapes; God was displeased, and for the Justice of his Anger he appealed to the Judgment and Conscience of those who had slighted his Favours, and said , What could I have done more to my Vineyard than I have done? I have done what I thought fit for me to do, and bestowed what I thought enough

enough for them to receive, and because they have made me no answerable Returns, I will take away my Hedge, and lay them waste.

Now sinner, take heed what will become of thee, and have a care of Folly in pretending to teach God what he might have done more for thee, and bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance, according to the grace bestowed. Remember the Fig-tree in the Gospel, which having no Fruit upon it when our Saviour sought it, was cursed and withered: And take St. *Cbrysoſt.* counsel concerning it; *We were beaten in this type, thou art frighted in this tree, thou art instructed, to thee is given wholesome Admonition; prevent the coming of the Lord with good Fruits :*

Matth.
21.18.

What

What God expects from thee let him find, let him have what he desires, lest what happened to this Tree from God, happen to thee also. It is not fit for sinners to dispute concerning grace, but to make use of it, and repent.

2. Of this they ought to be more careful, because God doth allow fair space of time to make use of the grace bestowed; he repeats his methods of Salvation, and sometimes alters them, which is a great demonstration of his benignity, and ought to move us effectually to make use of it. Though the Divine Spirit will not always strive with men, yet he continues his merciful Contest a great while. Though sinners be dull in apprehending, and careless in the consideration

sideration of grace offered; yet God is not presently weary, but waits to see if at last they will understand. It is mentioned as a great Favour which God bestowed upon the *Canaanites*, that he did not destroy them at once, though they highly deserved it, but gave them space for Repentance. *Thou didst punish the condemned with deliberation, giving them time and place whereby they might be delivered from their malice.* God is pleased to lengthen the tranquility of sinners, as *Daniel* saith, and so gives opportunity to make use of grace not only offered, but for some considerable time slighted, that so they might be saved, if they will yet make use of his Favour before their hearts

*Wisd. 12.
20.*

hearts are quite hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

Isa.

We read of the Jews in the Wilderness, that they vexed the Holy Spirit with their Disobedience; yet we read, that he bore with their ill

Act. 13.
18.

manners (ἐξουπρόσβησε) 40 years, and so gave them fair space to repent of their Ingratitude, and so save their Souls, though their Carcasses fell in the Desert. After they were come to *Canaan* he used the same Patience, sending his Prophets, rising up early and sending them, because he had compassion on his People — and this he did till there was no remedy. This same gentleness did our Saviour use towards them in the days of his Flesh, which made him say, when

2 Chron.
36. 15,
16.

when his grace was slighted, *O Je-^{Luke 13.}*
rusalem, Jerusalem, how oft would I
have gathered thy Children together,
as a Hen doth gather her Brood un-
der her Wings, and ye would not?
The same gracious patience doth
he express towards us still. How
oft hath God warned us by our
Spiritual Guides, and the Checks
of our own Consciences? How oft
hath he advised us by such, whose
known Prudence and great Chari-
ty was most likely to have made
their counsel acceptable? How
mercifully hath he tim'd his Pro-
posals, taking such seasons in
which we were in a temper most
likely to be wrought upon, both
when our hearts were softened with
the sense of some merciful Provi-
dences,

dences, and melted with kindness, the sparks of Ingenuity being blown up into a flame, or when sickness or some great affliction had shaken off our Carelessness, made us see great reason to think, and shown us necessity to hearken to advice?

Shall not the forementioned Assistances, granted with so much patience, make the sinner say? O Lord, I am that barren Fig-tree to which thou mightest have said long ago, *Never fruit grow on thee:* (O heavy Curse!) How oft have I given thee cause to say, *Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?* And when I have begged that thou wouldst stay another year, and promised to dig about it, and did not;
O

O Lord, thou hast not cut me down, but spared me one year, and another, and another. I thank thee, and now I will abuse thy goodness no longer. I will dig about it with prayers, sighs, fasting, and watching; I will water it with my tears, and endeavour that it may bring forth fruit answerable to thy just expectation. O foolish Soul! Is it nothing to play with Divine Patience, and to make God stand by whilst thou entertainest thy self with every trifling Vanity? O merciful Lord, how many years have I grieved thee in this Wilderness? How long hast thou born with my manners? How oft have I given thee cause to say to me as once thou didst, being

R 2 neg-

Cant. 5. 2.

neglected by thy sleepy Spouse,
who slumbred whilst thou stoodest
knocking, and made thee suffer
the Injuries of the weather, *My
Head is filled with Dew, and my
Locks with the Drops of the Night,*
before thou couldst have admittance?
There are many besides the *Ga-
darens*, who have turned thee out
of their Coasts by their rudeness;
O Lord, I am one of them, I con-
fess it with shame. But, O blessed
Jesus, go not from me, though I
deserve it. Return according to
thy Infinite goodness; I will ever
watch, I will never permit the
Door of my Soul to be shut against
thee.

The

The Third Motive.

3. The third Motive to Repentance is taken from that extreme misery which doth await the Impenitent, and will unavoidably fall upon them. This is told us plainly, *Thinkest thou this, O Man,* Rom. 2. 3.
that judgest them who do such things, 4. 5.
and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the Judgment of God? Or despisest thou the Riches of his Goodness, and forbearance, and long suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to Repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up to thyself wrath against the day of Wrath and Revelation of the

R 3

righ-

righteous Judgment of God.

The goodness of God, as I have shown, leads the sinner to Repentance, and so to Happiness by Pardon. This goodness he despiseth, and maintains in himself the hardness of an impenitent heart, a heart that will not relent, But thinkest thou this, O man, that so doing thou canst escape the Judgment of God? No; thou dost but treasure up wrath to thyself against the day of Wrath. Every sinner hath his measure for Iniquity, and the Impenitent fills it up; God also hath his Storehouse for Vengeance, and the obstinate sinner doth there lay up wrath against himself. At present this is a hidden Treasure, but
it

it shall be opened in the day of Wrath, when God will reveal the Righteousness of his Judgment upon such as would not repent.

God hath always declared this to be the last state of obdurate sinners; *He will wound the head of* ps. 68. 21. *his Enemies, and the hairy Scalp of such a one as goes on still in his wickedness.* Long before this it was said plainly by Moses, *If it come* Deut. 29. 19, 20. *to pass, when he heareth the words of this Curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace though I walk in the imagination of my heart, to add drunkenness to thirst; The Lord will not spare him, but then the Anger of the Lord and his Jealousie shall smoke against that man, and all the Curses that are*

R 4 written

written in this Book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his Name from under Heaven. He that despiseth the methods of God's grace, and continues his Disobedience, and yet perswades himself that all shall be well with him, doth highly provoke God. The Hope of the Disobedient is a great part of their Disobedience; for it is a presumptuous believing against the express Declarations of God's Will, and they shall be punished for it as an aggravation of their other sins. Such people slight the Divine Threatnings, disbelieve the Truth and Power of God concerning their performance; but they shall pay dear for it, especially in the great day of Wrath,

Wrath , when Christ will come in flaming Fire to render Vengeance to those who acknowledge God no better, and do wilfully disobey his Gospel.

This misery is dreadful , because the Sufferings, to which the Impenitent will be condemned, are so great, that now they would be intolerable , but which then they shall be made to endure. Of this I shall give account,

1. By a brief Rehearsal of the Descriptions of them which we find in Holy Scripture.
2. By the deep Impressions which they will make upon the spirits of damned
Im-

Impenitents, of which we are told in Holy Writ.

3. By setting down four particular Notices, which we have received concerning the dreadfulneſs of that ſtate.

1. By a brief Rehearſal of the Deſcriptions of the miſery of Impenitents, which we find recorded in Holy Scripture. It hath pleaſed God to expreſs the future Torments of Impenitent Souls, by taking reſemblances from the bodily pains with which they are now acquainted ; and hath choſen the moſt ſharp of thoſe which men ſuffer on Earth, to be Emblems of thoſe far greater which they

they shall suffer in Hell. I shall name a few of them.

Sometimes that miserable Condition is described by the Torment of Fire, than which nothing is more sharp; which is called *Matth. 5. 22. Hell Fire*; which, *Chap. 13. 49, 50.* is called a *Furnace of Fire*, into which the wicked shall be cast in the end of the World; and *Rev. 21. 8. a Lake of Fire and Brimstone*, into which several sorts of sinners there named shall be thrown; *Heb. 10. 27.* it is called Πυρὸς Ζήλου, which is translated *Fiery Indignation*, because of the fierceness of Divine Vengeance. This is terrible, and therefore such as are obnoxious to it are there said to be under

der a fearful expectation of Judgment.

It was a pain unspeakably dreadful which those old sinners endured, who were inclosed in *Sodom*, and made to perish in the noysom smoke of Brimstone, and the unsupportable Torment of Fire: But that is nothing to that which will be kindled in Hell, where the Fire will never go out, nor the Persons who are burnt in it ever be consumed.

Matth.
9.44.

Sometimes this Punishment is called the *Gnawing of the never dying Worm*; sometimes it is represented by *utter Darkneß*, which signifies the utmost disconsolateness of a dismal Condition. Happiness in Holy Writ is called *Light*, and

Col. 1. 12.

and Heaven the Inheritance of the Saints in Light. Those who are cast into utter Darkneſs, are removed to the fartheſt Diſtance from God, who is the Fountain of Life, and in whoſe Light the Bleſſed ſee Light. *Ps. l.*

It is called *The Blackneſs of Darkneſs*, i. e. the moſt Horrid, into which no glimpe of Light ſhines. This ſtate is worſe than that of a Malefactor, who is condemned to be made up between two Walls, there to periſh in Darkneſs, Hunger, and Solitude. *2 Pet. 2. 17*

Sometime this dreadful miſery is ſignified by a *Pit which hath no bottom*, into which the ungodly are to be caſt; and ſometime by the Torment of a *perpetual Rack*:
some-

Rev. 14.
10. sometime by a *Cup of Wrath*, called
the Wine of the Wrath of God, mixt
 with bitter Ingredients ; and in
 this World God doth make sin-
 ners to drink some drops, but in
 the great day he will make them
 Ps. 75. 8. drink up the Dregs of it, the bitter
 Wrath which lies in the bottom, in
 which is no Alloy of Mercy.
 Lastly, by the pains of the *second*
Death which the ungodly must en-
 dure ; which is a thousand times
 worse than the first ; for that is
 but a Temporal separation of the
 Soul from the Body , this an E-
 ternal separation of Body and Soul
 from God.

2. The

2. The greatness of this Misery is plainly declared by the deep impressions, which we are told it will make upon the spirits of damned Impenitents, as we perceive the acuteness of pain which men suffer by the grievousness of their Cries. Our Saviour says, that *Matth. 8. 12.* in the place to which the Impenitent shall be condemned, there will be *weeping and gnashing of Teeth.* These are Expressions of extreme grief, and show the extremity of Misery. A small matter will not make one cry out, nor a little cold make the Teeth chatter. No, it is *Rev. 6. 17.* because *the great day of wrath is come, and who shall be able to abide it?* The Impenitent would then be glad of Annihilation; it would be

be good for them that they were nothing, or as our Saviour says, *That they had never been born.* In great Anguish they will say to the *Mountains, fall on us, and to the Rocks, cover us, and bide us from the face of him that sitteth upon the Throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:* But the Rocks will be as deaf to the Impenitent then, as they are to God now.

3. Thirdly, The Impenitents misery is made known to them by four particular Notices which are given them of their dreadful Condition in the other World.

1. They

1. They are told beforehand what Company they shall have in Hell, and that is no better than the *Devil and his Angels*, Haters and hated of God: So the Sentence runs, *Go ye cursed into the Fire* Matth. 25.41. *prepared for the Devil and his Angels.* You hold of his side, and Wisd. 2. 24. it is fit you should share in his Lot. I called you to the hopes of my Mercy, and offered you a part in the happiness of Obedient Souls; but you rather chose to comply with your own and my Enemy, and to perish with Satan, rather than to hearken to me. Get you gone from me and all the blessed into that Fire, which was not designed for you, but was appointed as the punishment of Devils;
S but

but since you would have your portion in it, I confirm your choice.

This is sad : For the Devils were always, and are still, Enemies to Mankind : They were Murderers from the beginning, and are Malicious to the end. To be shut up with such Companions is a greater Torment than to be nailed up in a Vessel among Serpents. Will impenitent sinners be able to endure this ? *Can they dwell with everlasting Burnings ? Can they make an agreement with Hell, and a League with Devils ?* Do they think that cursed Fiends will make them welcome in Hell, because they have perswaded them to come thither ? Can they expect entertain-
ment

ment from such as are shut up in a lothsom Dungeon? What help will they give others, who are themselves in unspeakable Torments, and who are so malicious, that, if they could, they would not? *It is better to repent, than to go to such Company.*

2. The Impenitent will be exceedingly pain'd, because they will then see that it was their own folly, which brought them into the Misery which they shall then suffer; and that their Obstinacy deprived them of the Eternal Happiness, of which they might have been possessors. Those who in their life time would not be at leisure to be saved, shall then be forced to entertain multitudes of

§ 2 thoughts

thoughts which will blow the Coles of the unquenchable Fire. They will be galled perpetually by considering how sottishly they perished, sillily preferring a few short Pleasures before everlasting Felicity, and that notwithstanding it was offered them, and they often perswaded to chuse it. They will then see, and grieve to see it was folly enough to have chosen the Temporary Pleasures of sin, though for that they should only have been deprived of Eternal Joys; but that it was the highest Madness, when for that they shall also suffer Eternal Pains, and find that the greatness of their Worldly Prosperity, which they so much desired, having heightened their sin, shall also

also add to the sharpness of their punishment.

They will then see how sottishly they followed the evil Example of their fellow sinners, trampling upon God's Commands, and be sensible of the meanness of the Excuse which they made for their Unbelief, when they said, They could not think there was such a place as Hell, because they never talked with any that was there, or ever heard it proved by Philosophy. And they will wish then that they had believed God, who told them that there was such a place, that they might endeavour to escape it, and not have hearkened to their Ranting Companions, who not being able to pro-

duce any Arguments against it, made it their work to huff the belief of it out of the World; and that the rather, because they well knew, that if there be such a place, they themselves must be forced to take an undesirable Lodging in it. They will then see that it was unreasonable to ask for Demonstrations in matters of Divine Revelation, where God demands Faith upon his Word, remembering how fillily the old World laughed at *Noah* for building a Ship to sail, as they thought, upon dry ground, refusing to believe that there would be a Deluge, till they were afloat upon the Waves of it.

They

They will see then that Disbelief, after plain Declarations of God's Will, was not Courage, but stupid Presumption; and that continuance in sin against great Reasons to the contrary, was a malicious Obstinacy. They will then confess that no Tentation was a just Counterpoise to God's Promises, and that their sensual Appetites were no lawful warrant for the contradiction of the Reason of their Minds, and that it was extreme folly to slight the Motions of God's Spirit, and hearken to the Suggestions of the Devil. Will any dare to say to God then, *I knew thou wast austere, and reapest where thou didst not sow?* No; but remembering that they were graci-

S 4 ously

ously and often assisted, they will then too late curse the baseness of their Negligence and Ingratitude.

They will then be ashamed to return to God, having done nothing of the Errand upon which he sent them into the World, but very much to the contrary of it; and be afraid, because they go away *not having left any Testimony of their Vertue behind them*, but many damning Examples of Vice. They will hate their Being, perceiving by the sharp Remorse of their once baffled Consciences, that they must be their own Tormentors: whilst the space which was granted them for Repentance, makes their Impenitence more
Cri-

Criminal; and the sense of their having highly deserved what they suffer will make them acknowledge, that they are but justly deprived of that small Relief, which is commonly allowed to the Miserable, Pity.

3. Thirdly, The Impenitent will be gal'd with Envy, to see others possess that Happiness which once they might have enjoyed, but then slighted, and of which they are now for ever deprived. This we learn from our Saviour, *There shall be weeping and gnashing of* ^{Luke 13.} ^{28, 29.} *Teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the Prophets, in the Kingdom of God, and you your selves thrust out. And they shall come from the East, and from*

from the West, and from the North, and from the South, and shall sit down in the Kingdom of God. This sight will whet the Teeth of the never dying Worm, which will not only bite with the never ceasing remembrance of their unworthiness, and vex with the pain of late Repentance and continual Self-acculation; but also pine with Envy to see others happy in what they threw away. That which our Saviour added in this matter, is very considerable, *There are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last.* There are many which proud sinners despise, as persons a great way farther from Happiness than themselves, whom they laugh at for their Ignorance, flight

v.30.

flight for their mean Condition, and jeer for their precise Life, which shall enter into the Kingdom of God, when they themselves shall be stopt. So it was with the Jews to whom our Saviour spoke, they looked upon themselves as Sons of the Kingdom, Heirs of Happiness, great in Knowledge, splendid in their Family, beloved of God, satisfied in present Enjoyments, and big with Expectation; yet these so seemingly forward should be overrun by such as they thought unworthy to eat with them; and these should sit down with their pious Ancestors, where they, their boastful Progeny, should be excluded.

This

This matter is well expressed *Wisd. 5.* from the first Verse to the seventh, *Then shall the righteous man stand in great boldness before the face of such as have afflicted him, and made no account of his Labours. When they see it, they shall be troubled with terrible fear, and shall be amazed at the strangeness of his salvation, so far beyond all that they looked for. And they repenting and groaning for anguish of spirit, shall say within themselves, This was he whom we had sometime in Derision, and a Proverb of Reproach. We Fools accounted his life madness, and his end to be without honour. How is he numbred among the Children of God, and his lot is among the Saints? Therefore have we erred from the way of Truth,*

*Truth, and the Light of Righteousness
bath not shined upon us.*

This excellent Author gives an account of these Hectors, *Chap. 2.* where he tells us of them, that they placed all Happiness in this present Life—*Verse 2. We are born at all adventure, and we shall be hereafter as though we had never been: and therefore they crown'd their Heads with Rose-buds, and filled themselves with wine, being careful lest they should go away without their part of Jollity.* As to the Righteous man, he declares their carriage *verse 10, 12, 13, 14, 15.* Therefore they abused him with Rudeness, and treated him with all Cruelty in this World; but when they come into the other, and see him

him stand in great boldness before God, they are seized with a terrible fear, and vexed with Indignation at his Happiness, amazed at the strangeness of his salvation, whom before they scorn'd. All Impenitent sinners will be in such pain at our Saviour's coming, when they see obedient Souls taken up to meet him in the Air, and find themselves left upon the burning Earth, till they be called before his Throne, and be there adjudged to a worse Fire.

Hel. 4. 1.

The Author to the *Hebrews* set a sharp Edge upon his Exhortation, when he put it into these words, *Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his Rest, any of you should come short of it.*

It

It is not easie to imagin what grief seized the Unbelieving Jews, when they saw *Canaan*, and beheld those before them who were to go into that good Land, but themselves bar'd from it. After the pronuntiation of that sad Doom, with what pain did they wear away the hated remnant of their Lives, wandering in the Wilderness? Much more grievous will it be to see the Saviour of the World come with his glorious Attendants, and take up all good men and women, and carry them to the Heavenly *Canaan*, and leave the Impenitent, not to perish in the Wilderness, but to be carried to that Company and Torment which I have mentioned before. *Who would*

would not repent that knows this?

4. The misery of the Impenitent will be unsupportable, because they will despair of ever mending their Condition. It must needs put Vinegar into their Wounds, when they are assured that they cannot be healed.

This Assurance depends upon two things,

1. Upon this, That they are told before hand that the Sentence which will be pronounced, is irreversible.
2. Upon this, That they know that he who pronounceth it, is Omnipotent,

tent, and so can secure the Execution of it.

1. The Sentence is recorded in Scripture, and there we find it Irreversible: It is, *Go into everlasting Fire, into Fire which shall never be quenched; the Worm which torments you shall never die. The Punishment is everlasting.* Those who are cast into the Lake are ordered to be *tormented there for ever and ever.* Matt. 25.
ult.

Rev. 20.
14.

This is the Sentence, and he who pronounceth it is Omnipotent, and so can secure the Execution of it. He who could hinder the Fire of *Nebuchadnezzar's* Furnace from burning, tormenting, or consuming his Servants,

T must

must needs be able to make a Fire which will burn and torment, and yet not consume his Enemies. Shall bold sinners be annihilated because they desire it, knowing they shall have no part of Felicity, if there be any in the other World? No; God hath appointed them worse than so; and it is but just. Why should not God punish such as long as he pleaseth, who sinned as long as they could? Why should their punishment have an end, who would never leave sinning? Life was propounded upon good terms, which if it were refused, it was declared that Death would be the Consequent: they were perswaded to chuse Life, they would not; and having refused it, will they be
angry

angry that they suffer what they would have? A Law was given by the Sovereign Rector of the World, Death was threatned upon the breach of it; they would break it: they were condemned by that Law; yet Pardon was offered, they would not accept it: so that they perisht not because they sinned, nor yet because they were condemned; but because they would be Executed. Their Misery is their Choice. But, as I said, this makes it unspeakably great, it will have no end. There is no ἀντάλλαγμα, as the LXXII. translate the twentieth Verse of Psalm 55. no Ransom for such hereafter, as would not return from sin by Repentance here.

Dives was not only vexed with Envy, when he looked up and saw *Lazarus* in *Abraham's* bosom, but mad with Rage when he saw the unpassable Gulf between himself and them. That Parable is a Map of the future state of Impenitents, they have no hope to ascend out of the Infernal Pit; they are sent Prisoners to that Goal, whose Bars are made too strong for all created Power to break.

The

The Conclusion.

Now I am come to the Close of this Discourse, which I shall shut up with this short Exhortation; Let us all, in the fear of God, endeavour by timely and true Repentance to escape the Wrath to come: *Knowing the Terrors of the Lord, let us perswade ourselves to this Duty.* Let us not baffle all the Methods of his Grace, and amongst others this of his Threatnings, Have we no Passion upon which God can work? Are not the Threatnings which I have mentioned dreadful? Have

we no Fear in us? or are we afraid of any thing but God? Have we lost the use of the Natural Principle of Self-preservation, when it is applied to our greatest Danger? Are Eternal Happiness and Misery words only? Do they not signify things of greatest Importance? And yet do they make no Impression upon our hard hearts? Sure then they are grown perfect Stone, and not to be softened, except in the Lake of Fire and Brimstone. *No, rather, O merciful God, take them out of our Breasts, and into their room put hearts of Flesh.* Must we needs sin on though we be damned for it? What is it that makes
sin

fin so dear to us? We have been told by one whom we ought to believe, *That it were much better for us to go into Heaven with an Eye plucked out, with the loss of a right Hand, or a Foot cut off, than to carry a whole Body into Hell.*— Yes; but we sin for fear. How? Do we fear them, who can kill the Body (if ^{Matth.} 10.28. they be permitted from above) but after that can do no more, and not dread him who can cast both Body and Soul into Hell? It is a dreadful thing to fall into the Hands of the Living God.

Impenitent , to what purpose dost thou sin on, and put the Evil Day from thee, whose approach thou canst no more delay , than hinder the Morning Sun from rising at the appointed Minute? Dost thou not

2 Pet. 2.
3. know that thy *Judgment doth not linger, and that thy Damnation slumbereth not?* Pardon upon Repentance is given at an easie rate, and upon that it may be had. Sure thou darést not ask of God leave to sin ; what then makes thee so bold as not to repent? He that sins , Rebels ; He that Repents not continues his Rebellion ; And can that man think that God will not be even with him? *How can*

can such a one escape the Damna-^{Matt. 23.}
tion of Hell? Shall God ever
33
hearken to thee crying from
Hell, who dost despise him who
hath spoken to thee from Hea-
ven? Be wise, fear and re-
pent, remembering that good
advice which is given thee
Luke 12. 57, 58, 59. Why even
of your selves judge ye not what
is right? When thou goest with
thine Adversary to the Magistrate,
as thou art in the way, give dili-
gence that thou mayest be deliver-
ed from him; lest he hale thee to
the Judge, and the Judge deli-
ver thee to the Officer, and the Of-
ficer cast thee into Prison. I tell
thee thou shalt not depart thence
till thou hast paid the very last
mite.

mite. In these words our Saviour doth reproach men, for not using the same prudence in managing their affairs with God, which they do with men. It is their known practise, that when they have a difference of Concern with another who hath an Advantage against them, they compose it as soon as they can, hoping the sooner they do it to have fairer terms, and fearing that if they put off the matter till it come before the Judge, he will pronounce severely against them, and that having stood out to the last, their Adversary will make his benefit of the Sentence, and force them to pay the whole Debt,

Debt, or else lie in Prison.

How much more should we give diligence to be reconciled to God? Shall we maintain an Action at Law in which we are sure to be cast, and that against God? *Do we contend with the Lord? Are we stronger than He?* No; let us humble our selves speedily before him, and make our peace as soon as we can. He that stands out in sin can hope for no pardon at the day of Judgment. Let us do as the Psalmist bids us, *Kiss the Son lest* ps. 2. 12. *he be angry, and ye perish in the way; when his wrath is kindled but a little, blessed are all they that put their trust in him.* Let us with all Expressions of humble Subjection

jection address our selves to the Son of God, who only can reconcile us to his Father; and do it speedily, lest loitering in the way of sin, his Wrath overtake us, and we perish in our sinful Course. If his Anger once begin to burn, there is no Happiness, but for such who beforehand have made him their Friend, and so can now put their Trust in him. And let every Penitent for his Encouragement know, that in so doing he doth comply with the Intentions of God, who designing our good, hath made his Threatnings one means of our Salvation. He hath menaced sin, and let us know the sad Doom of the Impenitent;

nitent; not that thereby we should be affrighted into Despair, but that by this means we might be more easily perswaded to sin no more, and so escape the Punishment threatned: For our Saviour hath told us what he hath said of the Wrath to come, as he hath all other things in his Gospel, to this end, *that we might be saved.* Job. 5. 34

F I N I S.

E R R A T A.

Pag. 15. lin. 7. for bad, read bold. p. 28. l. 13. r. but. p. 30. l.
 penult. r. what shame, what. p. 50. l. 14. r. *τις*. p. 67. l. 15.
 r. faults. p. 78. l. 9. r. can truly say. p. 84. l. 11. r. found. p. 93.
 l. 11. r. chequer'd. l. 14. r. plain. p. 101. l. 2. r. Love. p. 103.
 l. 17. r. with Reserves. p. 118. l. 1. r. smooth. p. 123. l. 16. r.
 pleasures. p. 124. l. 13. for careful observance, r. careful-
 ness. p. 132. l. 19. for life, r. use. p. 137. l. 12. for in, r. with.
 p. 151. l. 15. r. perpend. p. 155. l. ult. r. reaching. p. 174. l. 1. r.
 up in. p. 177. l. ult. r. have. p. 178. l. 4. r. *κακόν*. p. 182. l. 9.
 for bodies, r. ceasing of bodily. p. 185. l. 17. r. *ὁμοῦ*.
 p. 187. l. 14. after *ἁγίου*, add, the Divine part. p. 219. l. 3.
 dele full.

SOME
CONSIDERATIONS
ABOUT
The Reconcilableness
OF
REASON
AND
RELIGION.

By T. E. A LAY-MAN. (Robert Boyle)

To which is annex'd by the Publisher,
A Discourse of Mr. Boyle,
ABOUT
THE POSSIBILITY
OF THE
RESURRECTION.

*Homines absque rerum discrimine incredulos esse,
summa est imperitia. Verulam. in Novo Organo.*

LONDON,

Printed by T. N. for H. Herringman, at the Anchor
in the Lower Walk of the New Exchange. 1675.

CONSIDERATIONS

ON

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12

OF

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OF

OF

THE
Publisher
TO THE
READER.

THESE Considerations about
Religion and *Reason*, deliv-
er'd by a Person of an excellent
Genius and Ability to consider the
Nature of the things he is wont to
discourse upon, being fallen into
my hands, nor being forbidden to
publish them; I thought the Sub-
ject so weighty, and the way of
handling it both so discreet and
solid, that I could not forbear re-
commending it to the Press, being
fully persuaded, the Publick in ge-
neral, as well as all Persons in parti-
cular that are concern'd for the
safety both of *Reason* and *Religion*,

The Publisher to the Reader.

and consequently for their Dignity as they are *Men*, and their Nobleness as they are *Christians*, will find sufficient cause to be pleased with the publication of it. To which I have nothing to add but that, whereas at the beginning of the following Discourse there is mention made of its being to consist of *Two* Parts; one, to shew, that a Christian *need* not lay aside his Reason; and the other, that he is *not commanded* to do so: The Author thought fit to keep that Paper, which concern'd the latter, from *now* accompanying the former, which seems the most seasonable, and likeliest to make impressions on that sort of Persons, whom he chiefly designs to persuade.

THE

T H E

Preface.

T Is the just Grief, and frequent Complaint of those that take to heart the Concerns of Religion, that they see it now more furiously assaulted and studiously undermin'd than ever, not only by the vicious Lives of Men, but by their licentious Discourses. I know, there have been Vices in the World, as long as there have been Men: And 'tis an observation as old as Solomon, Eccles. 7. 10. That Men are apt to look upon their own Times as worse than those that preceded them. And because I remember too, that in reciting this Complaint he disapproves it; I shall not dispute, whether other Ages have been less faulty than this we live in: But this I think I may say with as much Truth as Grief, that, among us here in England, the Times, to which our memory can reach, have been less guilty, than the present Time is, of a spreading and bold Profaneness. For, though many allow'd themselves to

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court Gold, and Cups, and Mistresses, little less than now they do; yet these were still acknowledg'd to be Faults even by those that committed them, and the Precepts and the Counsels of Religion were neglected or disobeyed, but not their Authority thrown off or affronted; Men retaining yet such a kind of respect for Her, as the elder Son in the Parable did for his Father, when, receiving a command from him to go and work in his Vineyard, he answer'd, I go Sir; though he went not, Mat. 21. 30. But now too many of the Vicious do not only scandalously violate the Laws of Religion, but question the Truth, and despise the very Name of it. They rather choose to imitate the Rebels in the other Parable, and say of Religion what they did of their lawful King, when they insolently declar'd, that they would not have him to reign over them, Luke 19. 14. They seek not to hide their sins like Adam, but think either to cover or protect all others by that greatest of all, Impiety; and, instead of cheating Conscience into silence, (as sinners, not impudent, are wont to do,) by deceitful promises of repenting hereafter of their sins, they endeavour to stifle or depose it, by maintaining, that Repentance is a weakness of mind, and Conscience ought not

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to be look'd on as the Vicegerent of a Deity, whose very Existence or Providence they dispute.

And that which more troubled me, and made me most apprehend the spreading of this Impiety, was, that it was propagated in a new way, that made me fear, the Arguments not only of vulgar Preachers, but even of learned Divines themselves, would be much less fit than formerly to give a check to its progress. For, till of late, the generality of our Infidels did, either as Philosophers, question the Historical part of the Scriptures, and perhaps cavil at some of the Doctrines; or, if they employed Philosophical Arguments, as Pomponatius and Vaninus did, they borrow'd them from Aristotle, or the Peripatetick School. And against both these sorts of Adversaries, the learned Champions of the Christian Religion, such as Vives, Mornay, and Grovius, had furnish'd Divines with good and proper Weapons. For, the Historical part of the Scriptures, and especially the Miracles, were strongly confirmable by competent Testimonies, and other Moral Proofs, sufficient in their kind. And Aristotle being himself a dark and dubious Writer, and his Followers being on that account divided into Sects and Parties, which for the most

IV THE PREFACE.

part had nothing to alledge but his single Authority, 'twas not difficult to answer the Arguments drawn from the Peripatetick Philosophy; and, if that could not have been done, it had not been difficult to reject the Doctrines themselves as false or precarious. But our new Libertines take another and shorter way, (though I hope it will not be a more prosperous one,) to undermine Religion. For, not troubling themselves to examine the Historical or Doctrinal parts of Christian Theology, in such a way as Jews, Pagans, Mahometans, would do; These deny those very Principles of Natural Theology, wherein the Christian, and those other differing, Religions agree, and which are suppos'd in almost all Religions, that pretend to Revelation, namely, the Existence and Providence of a Deity, and a Future State (after this life is ended.) For, these Libertines own themselves to be so upon the account of the Epicurean, or other Mechanical, Principles of Philosophy, and therefore to press them with the Authorities wont to be employ'd by Preachers, is improper, since they are so far from paying any respect to the venerable Fathers of the Church, that they slight the generality of the Heathen Philosophers themselves, judging no Writers worthy of that name,

but

THE PREFACE.

but those that, like Leucippus, Democritus, Epicurus, &c. explicate things by Matter and Local Motion; and therefore 'tis not to be expected, that they should reverence any more the Peripatetick Arguments of Scotus or Aquinas, than the Homilies of St. Augustine, or St. Chrysostom; and to give Aristotle himself the Title of The Philosopher, were enough to make some of them conclude the Ascriber were no Philosopher. And this, by the way, may excuse me for not having brought into the following Papers the Sentences of the Fathers or the Moralists, or the Authority of Aristotle, or any of the School-Philosophers, which I should have declin'd to employ, though my frequent removes from place to place, when I was writing these Papers, had not deny'd me the convenience of a Library.

Things being at this pass, though the Title of this Discourse acknowledges the Author of it to be a Layman; yet I shall not beg pardon for the ensuing Papers as for an intrenchment upon the Ecclesiasticks. For besides that, though I know some Functions, yet I know no Truths, of Religion, that have the peculiarity of the Shew-bread under the Law, Mat. 12. 4. with which it was lawful only for the Priests to meddle; I
will

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will not 'so far mistrust the Charity of Churchmen, as not to suppose, that they will rather thank than blame any man, that being not altogether a stranger to this warfare, offers them his assistance against the common Enemy in so important a quarrel, and so great a danger. The Fathers, and other Divines, being wont to compare the Church Militant to a ship, 'twill not be an improper extension of the Comparison, to say, that, when the Vessel is threatned with shipwrack, or boarded by Pyrates, it may be the Duty not only of profess'd Seamen, but any private Passenger, to lend his helping hand in that common danger. And I wish, I were as sure, that my endeavors will prove successful, as I am, that such Churchmen as I most esteem will think them neither needless nor unseasonable. Nay, perhaps my being a Secular person, may the better qualifie me to work on those I am to deal with, and may make my Arguments, though not more solid in themselves, yet more prevalent with men that usually (though how justly, let them consider,) have a particular pique at the Clergy, and look with prejudice upon whatever is taught by men, whose interest is advantag'd by having what they teach believed. And I was the more invited not to be a meer Spectator,

THE PREFACE. vii

tor, or a lazy Deplorer of the danger I saw Religion in, because it seem'd not unlikely, that Philosophical Infidels, as they would be thought, would be less tractable to Divines, though never so good Humanists and Antiquaries, than to a person that reasons with them upon their own grounds, and discourses with them in their own way, having had a somewhat more than ordinary curiosity to acquaint himself with the Epicurean and Cartesian Principles, and exercise himself in that Philosophy, which is very conversant with things Corporal, and strives to explain them by Matter and Motion, and shakes off all Authority (at least that is not infallible.) Upon such Considerations as these, I comply'd with an occasion I had of solemnly asking Reason the Question, that Joshua once ask'd the Angel that appear'd to him in the Plains of Jericho, Art thou for us, or for our Adversaries? Josh. 5. 14; and of committing to Paper those thoughts that should occur to me on that Subject. And this I the rather did, that I might thereby as well contribute to my own satisfaction as to that of my Friends. For, as I think, that there is nothing that belongs to this life, that so much deserves our serious care as what will become of us when we are past it; so I think,

think, that he who takes a resolution either to embrace or reject so important a thing as Religion, without seriously examining why he does it, may happen to make a good Choice, but can be but a bad Chooser. And that I might not exclude, by too early a method, those things, that, for ought I knew, might hereafter be pertinent and useful, I threw my Reflections into one Book, as into a Repository, to be kept there only as a heap of differing materials, that, if they appear'd worth it, they might be afterwards review'd, and sorted, and drawn into an orderly Discourse. But, before I began to do what I intended, a succession of accidents, (wherewith 'twould not be proper to trouble the Reader,) quite diverted me to employments of a very distant nature; so that these Papers, being thrown by, did for divers years lie neglected, with many others, till at length the person, for whose perusal I in the first place design'd them, join'd with some other intelligent Friends to urge me to send them abroad, though I was not in a condition to give them the finishing strokes, or so much as to fill up several of the Blanks, my haste had made me leave to be supply'd when I should be at leisure. And indeed, notwithstanding the just aversness I had from letting a piece so incom-

incomplete and uncorrected appear in this Critical Age; yet the hopes, they confidently gave me, that this piece, such as it is, might not be unacceptable nor useless, were not, I confess, altogether groundless.

Novelty being a thing very acceptable in this age, and particularly to the persons I am to deal with, to whom perhaps 'tis none of the least endearments of their Errors, I despair not, that 'twill somewhat recommend these Papers, to which I designed to commit not Transcripts of what I thought they may have already met with in Authors, but such considerations, as a serious attention, and the nature of the things I treated of, suggested to me; so that most of the things will perhaps be thought new; and some few things coincident with what they may have elsewhere met with, may possibly appear rather to have been suggested by considering the same subjects, to other Authors and to me, than to have been borrowed by me of them. But some few things, I confess, I employ, that were commonly enough employed before, and I hope, I may in that have done Religion no disservice; For having taken notice, that some of the more familiar Arguments had a real force in them, but had been so un-
wari-

warily proposed as to be lyable to exceptions that had discredited them; I made it my care, by proposing them more cautiously, to prevent such objections, which alone kept their force from being apparent.

I was not unmindful of the great Disadvantage this Tract was likely to undergo, partly for want of a more curious method, and partly because my other occasions required, that if I Published it at all, it must be left to come abroad unpolish'd and unfinished. But though this Inconvenience had like to have suppress'd this Discourse; yet the force of it was much weaken'd by this consideration, that this immethodical way of Writing would best comply with what was designed and pretended in this Paper, which was, not to write a compleat Treatise of the Subject of it; but only to suggest about it some of those many considerations, that (questionless) might have occurred to (what I do not pretend to) an Enlightned and Penetrating Intellect. And the Loadstone, divers of whose Phenomena are mention'd in the body of this little Tract, suggested somewhat to me in reference to the Publication of it, by exciting in me a hope, that, if this Discourse have any thing near as much Truth as I endeavour'd to furnish

it

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it with, that Truth will have its operation upon sincere Lovers of it, notwithstanding the want of regularity in the method: As a good Loadstone will not, by being rough and rudely shap'd, be hinder'd from exercising its Attractive and Directive powers upon Steel and Iron.

As for the Style, I was rather shy than ambitious of bringing in the Thorns of the School-men or the Flowers of Rhetoric: For, the latter, though they had of their own accord sprung up under my Pen, I should have thought improper to be employed in so serious and Philosophical a Subject: And as to the former, I declin'd them, in complaisance to the humor of my Infidels, who are generally so prejudic'd against the School-men, that scarce any thing can be presented them with more disadvantage than in a Scholastick dress; and a Demonstration will scarce pass for a good Argument with some of them, if it be formed into a Syllogism in mode and figure. That therefore, which I chiefly aim'd at in my expressions, was significancy and clearness, that my Reader might see, that I was willing to make him judge of the strength of my Arguments, and would not put him to the trouble of divining in what it lay,
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nor inveigle him by ornaments of speech, to think it greater than it was. I was also led by my Reason, as well as by my Inclination, to be careful not to rail at my Infidels: And though I have some cause to think, that many of them had their understandings debauch'd by their lives, and were seduc'd from the Church not by Diagoras or Pyrrho, but by Bacchus and Venus; yet I treat them as supposing them to be what they would be thought, Friends to Philosophy: And being but a Layman, I did not think my self obliged to talk to them as out of a Pulpit, and threaten them with Damnation unless they believ'd me, but chose to discourse to them rather as to erring Virtuosi, than Wicked wretches.

This moderation that I have us'd towards them, will, I hope, induce them to grant me two or three reasonable requests; whereof the first shall be, that they would not make a final judgment of these Papers till they have perus'd them quite through; especially having in their Eye what is declar'd in the Preamble, where both the design and scope of the whole discourse, and what it does not pretend to, is exprest. The next thing I am to request of them, and my Readers, is, that they would

would not have the meaner thoughts of my Arguments for not being propos'd with the confidence, wherewith many Writers are wont to recommend weaker proofs. For I wrote to intelligent Men, and, in the judgment of such, I never observ'd that a Demonstration ceas'd to be thought one for being modestly propos'd; but I have often known a good Argument lose of its credit by the invidious Title of a Demonstration. And I must further beg my Readers, to estimate my Design in these Papers by the Title of them, in which I do not pretend to make Religion trample upon Reason, but only to shew the Reconcilableness of the one to the other, and the friendly agreement between them. I am a person, who looking upon it as my Honour and Happiness to be both a Man, and a Christian, would neither write nor believe any thing, that might misbecome me in either of those two capacities. I am not a Christian, because it is the Religion of my Countrey, and my Friends; nor, because I am a stranger to the Principles either of the Atomical, or the Mechanical Philosophy. I admit no mans Opinions in the whole lump, and have not scrupled, on occasion, to own dissents from the generality of lear-

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ned men, whether Philosophers or Divines : And when I choose to travel in the beaten Road, 'tis not because I find 'tis the Road, but because I judge 'tis the Way. Possibly I should have much fewer Adversaries, if all those that yet are so, had as attentively and impartially consider'd the Points in Controversie as I have endeavour'd to do. They would then, 'tis like, have seen, that the Question I handle, is not whether Rational Beings ought to avoid Unreasonable Assents, but whether, when the Historical and other Moral Proofs clearly sway the Scales in favour of Christianity, we ought to shie from the Difficulties that attend the granting of a Deity and Providence, to Hypotheses, whether Epicurean or others, that are themselves incumber'd with confounding Difficulties : On which account I conceive, that the Question between them and me is not, whether They, or I, ought to submit to Reason (for we both agree in thinking our selves bound to that ;) but whether They or I submit to Reason the fullest inform'd, and least byass'd by Sensuality, Vanity, or Secular Interest.

I reverence and cherish Reason as much, I hope, as any of them ; but I would have Reason practise Ingenuity as well as Curiosity,

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sity, and both industriously pry into things within her sphere, and frankly acknowledge (what no Philosopher that considers will deny) that there are some things beyond it. And in these it is, that I think it as well her Duty to admit Revelation, as her Happiness to have it propos'd, to her: And, even as to Revelations themselves, I allow Reason to judge of them, before she judges by them. The following Papers will, I hope, manifest, that the main difference betwixt my Adversaries and me is, that they judge upon particular Difficulties and Objections, and I, upon the whole matter. And to conclude; as I make use of my Watch to estimate Time, when ever the sun is absent or clouded, but when he shines clearly forth, I scruple not to correct and adjust my Watch by his Beams cast on a Dial; so, wherever no better Light is to be had, I estimate Truth by my own Reason; but where Divine Revelation can be consulted, I willingly submit my fallible Reason to the sure Informations afforded by Celestial Light.

I should here put an end to this long Preface, but that to the things, which have been said concerning what I have written of my own, I see 'tis requisite that I add a few

few words about what I quote from other Writers ; especially because in this very Preface I mention my having intended to entertain my Friend with my own Thoughts. Of the Citations therefore that my Reader will meet with in the following Papers, I have this Account to give him :

(1.) That I had written the Considerations and Distinctions to which they are annexed, before I met with these cited Passages, which I afterwards inserted in the Margent, and other vacant places of my Epistle. (2.) That these Passages are not borrow'd from Books that treat of the Truth of the Christian Religion, or of Christian Theology at all, but are tak'n from Authors that write of Philosophical Subjects, and are by me apply'd to Mine, which are usually very distant from Theirs. (3.) If you then ask me, why I make use of their Authority, and did not content my self with my own Ratiocinations? I have this to Answer ; that my design being to convince another who had no reason to look upon my Authority, and whom I had cause to suspect to have entertain'd some prejudices against any Reasons that should come from one that confessedly aim'd at the defending of the Christian Religion, I thought it very proper
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and expedient to let him see, that divers of the same things (for substance,) that I deliver'd in favour of that Religion, had been taught as Philosophical Truths by Men that were not profess'd Divines, and were Philosophers, and such strict Naturalists too, as to be extraordinarily careful not to take any thing into their Philosophy upon the account of Revelation. And on this occasion let me observe to you, that there are some Arguments, which being clearly built upon Sense or evident Experiments, need borrow no Assistance from the Refutation of any of the Proposers or Approvers, and may, I think, be fitly enough compar'd to Arrows shot out of a Cross-Bow, or Bullets shot out of a Gun, which have the same strength, and pierce equally, whether they be discharg'd by a Child, or a strong Man. But then, there are other Ratiocinations, which either do, or are suppos'd to depend, in some measure, upon the judgment and skill of those that make the Observations whereon they are ground, and their Ability to discern Truth from Counterfeits, and Solid things from those that are but Superficial ones: And these may be compar'd to Arrows shot out of a Long-Bow, which make much the greater

impression, by being shot by a strong and skilful Archer. And therefore when we question, what Doctrines ought or ought not to be thought Reasonable, it do's not a little facilitate a Propositions appearing (not Contrary, but) Consonant to Reason, that 'tis look'd upon as such by those that are acknowledged the Masters of that Faculty.

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E R R A T A.

PAg. 38. line 6. read *of* for *or*. ib. l. 9. dele all that is contained in that whole parenthesis. ib. l. 19. The discourse, beginning in that line with the words, *if no body*, and ending p. 43. l. 7. with the words, *contiguous and moved*, is to be included between two signs of a Parenthesis, []. P. 43. l. 18. del. Parenthesis before the words, *as were*, and put it l. 20. before the word, *and*.

SOME
CONSIDERATIONS
 ABOUT
The Reconcilableness
 OF
REASON & RELIGION.

The First Part.



Sto what you write in your Friends name, near the bottom of the first page of your Letter, perhaps I shall not mistake, if I guess, that, when He seems but to propose a *Question*, he means an *Objection*; and covertly intimates, that I, among many others, am reduc'd to that pass, that to embrace our *Religion*, we must renounce our *Reason*; and consequently, that to be a *Christian*, one must cease to be a *Man*, and much more, leave off being a *Philosopher*.

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What liberal Concessions soever some others have been pleas'd to make on such an Occasion as this, they do not concern me ; who, being ask'd but my own Opinion, do not think my self responsible for that of others. And therefore, that I may frame my Answer so, as to meet both with the obvious sense of the Question, and the intimated meaning of Him that proposes it, I shall roundly make a *Negative* Reply, and say, *That I do not think, that a Christian, to be truly so, is oblig'd to forego his Reason; either by denying the Dictates of right Reason, or by laying aside the Use of it.*

I doubt not but this Answer is differing enough from what your Friend expects ; and perhaps those Grants, that have been made by the Indulgence or Inadvertency of many persons, eminent for being Pious or Learned, may make you your self startle at this Declaration: And therefore, though you will not, I know, expect an Answer to what Objections your Friend may make, since he has express'd but what He thinks ought to be a Christian's Opinion, not what he has to object against what is so ; yet, to satisfy those Scruples that you your self may retain, I shall endeavor

vor (but with the Brevity that becomes a Letter) to acquaint you by *themselves*, with *some* of the *Positive* Inducements, that have led me to this Opinion, and *interweave some others*, in answering the chief Objections that I think likely to be made against it.

And this Preamble, short as it is, will, I hope, serve to keep you from mistaking my design; which, as you may gather from what I have intimated, is not to give you the *positive* proofs of the Christian Religion (which is not here to be expected from a bare Defendant,) but to give you some *specimens* of such general Considerations, as may probably shew, that the Matter (or Essential Doctrines) peculiar to the Christian Religion, is not so repugnant to the Principles of true Natural Philosophy, as that to believe them, a Man must cease to act like a Rational Man, any more than he would be oblig'd to do by embracing other Religions, or even the Tenents that have been held without disparagement to their Intellectuals, by the meer Philosophers themselves; which last Clause I add, because I presume, you do not expect, that I should be solicitous to vindicate the Christi-

ans belief of a Deity from being Irrational ; since, besides that perhaps your Friend would think himself affronted to be dealt with as an *Atheist*, without having profess'd himself one, the Acknowledgment of a Deity blemishes the Christian's Reason no more, than it do's that of Men of all Religions , not to say of all Mankind; and imports no other contradiction to Reason, than what has been judg'd to be none at all by the Greatest, if not by all, of the Philosophers that were fam'd for being guided by Reason (without Revelation.) And I shall venture to add (upon the by) that, *as* I do not for my own part think the Atheists Philosophical Objections (if your Friend had produc'd them) to be near so considerable for weight or number, as not only those few that deny a God, but many of those that believe one, are wont to think ; so the Christian is not reduc'd, as is imagin'd, to make the Being of a Deity a meer *Postulatum* ; since, besides the Philosophical Arguments he can alledge in common with the best Champions for a Deity, he has a peculiar Historical Proof that may suffice ; the Miracles perform'd by Christ and his followers being such, that

that if the matter of Fact can be (as it may be) well evinc'd, they will not only prove the rest of the Christian Religion, but in the first place, That there must be a God to be the Author of them.

But though of the two things which my design obliges me to Endeavor the making good of, the most Natural order seems to be, that I should *first* shew, That no Precepts of Christianity do *command* a Man to lay aside his Reason in matters of Religion; and *then*, That there is nothing in the Nature of the Christian Doctrine it self that makes a Man *need* to do so; Yet I think it not amiss in treating of these two Subjects to invert the Order, and *first* consider that difficulty which is the Principal, and which your Friend and You jointly desire to have my thoughts of; namely, *Whether there be a necessity for a Christian to deny his Reason?* And *then* we shall proceed to examine, *Whether*, though he *need* not disclaim his Reason, it be nevertheless his *Duty* so to do?

SECT. I.

To proceed then to the Considerations that make up the former Part of this Epistle ; I shall in the first place distinguish betwixt that which the Christian Religion it self teaches, and that which is taught by this or that Church or Sect of Christians, and much more by this or that particular Divine or Schoolman.

I Need not persuade you, who cannot but know it so well already, that there are many things taught about the Attributes and Decrees of God, the Mysteries of the Trinity, and Incarnation, and divers other Theological Subjects, about which not only private Christians, but Churches of Christians do not at all agree. There are too many Men, whose Ambition, or Boldness, or Self-conceit, or Interest, leads them to obtrude upon others, as parts of Religion, Things that are not only Strangers, but oftentimes Enemies to it. And there are others, who out of an indiscreet Devotion are so solicitous to increase the Number and the Wonderfulness of Mysteries, that, to hear them propose

propose and Discourse of things, one would judge, that they think it is the office of *Faith*, not to elevate, but to trample upon *Reason*; and that things are then fittest to be believ'd, when they are not clearly to be proved or understood. And indeed, when on the one side I consider the charitable design of the Gospel, and the candid simplicity that shines in what it proposes, or commands; and on the other side, what strange and wild Speculations and Inferences have been father'd upon it, not only in the Metaphysical Writings of some Schoolmen, but in the Articles of Faith of some Churches; I cannot but think, that if all these Doctrines are parts of the Christian Religion, the Apostles, if they were now aliye, would be at best but *Catechumini*; and I doubt not but many of the nice Points that are now much valued, and urg'd by some, would be as well disapproved by *St. Paul*, as by *Aristotle*; and should be as little entertain'd by an Orthodox Divine, as a Rigid Philosopher. I do not therefore allow all *that* for Gospel, which is taught for such in a Preachers Pulpit, or ev'n a Professors Chair. And therefore, if Scholastick Writers, of

what Church soever, take the liberty of imposing upon the Christian Religion their Metaphysical Speculations, or any other meerly humane Doctrines, as matters of Faith, I who, not without some Examination, think Metaphysicks themselves not to have been for the most part over-well understood, and apply'd, shall make bold to leave all such private Doctrines to be defended by their own Broachers or Abettors; and shall deny, that it will follow, That in case of this multitude of Placets, which some bold Men have been pleas'd to adopt into the Catalogue of Christian Verities, any or all should be found inconsistent with right Reason, the Christian Religion must be so too. For by that name I understand onely that System of Reveal'd Truths that are clearly deliver'd in the Scriptures; or by legitimate and manifest consequences deduc'd thence. And by this one Declaration so many unnecessary and perhaps hurtful Retainers to Christianity will be at once thrown off, that I doubt not, but if you consider the Matter aright, you will easily discern, that by this first Distinction I have much lessen'd the work that is to be done by those that are to follow it.

SECT.

SECT. II.

In the next place, among the things that seem not rational in Religion, I make a great difference between those, in which unenlightned Reason is manifestly a competent Judge, and those which Natural Reason it self may discern to be out of its Sphere.

You will allow me, That Natural Theology is sufficient to evince the Existence of the Deity; and we know that many of the old Philosophers, that were unassisted by Revelation, were, by the force of Reason, led to discover and confess a God, that is, a Being supremely perfect; under which Notion divers of them expressly represent him. Now, if there be such a Being, 'tis but reasonable to conceive, that there may be many things relating to his Nature, his Will, and his management of things, that are without the Sphere of meer or unassisted Reason. For, if his Attributes and Perfections be not fully comprehensible to our Reason, we can have but inadequate Conceptions of them; and since God

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is a Being, *toto Cælo*, as they speak, differing from all other Beings, there may be some things in his Nature, and in the manner of his Existence, which is without all Example or perfect Analogy in inferior Beings. For we see, that ev'n in Man himself the Coexistence and intimate Union of the Soul and Body, that is, an Immaterial and a Corporeal Substance, is without all President or Parallel in Nature. And though the truth of this Union may be prov'd; yet the manner of it was never yet, nor perhaps ever will be, in this Life clearly understood, (to which purpose I shall elsewhere say more.) Moreover, if we suppose God to be Omnipotent, (that is, to be able to do whatever involves no Contradiction that it should be done,) we must allow him to be able to do many things that no other Agent can afford us any Examples of, and some of them perhaps such, as we, who are but finite, and are wont to judge of things by Analogy, cannot conceive how they can be perform'd. Of the last sort of things may be the recollecting a sufficient quantity of the scatter'd matter of a Dead humane Body, and the contriving of it so, that (whether alone
or

or with some addition of other Particles) upon a reconjuncti^on with the Soul, it may again constitute a living Man, and so effect that Wonder we call the *Resurre^ction*. Of the latter sort is the Creation, of Matter out of nothing, and much more the like Production of those Rational and Intelligent Beings, *Humane Souls*. For as for *Angels* (good or bad,) I doubt, whether meer Philosophy can evince their Existence, though I think it may the possibility thereof. And since we allow the Deity a Wisdom equal to this boundless Power, 'tis but reasonable to conceive, that these unlimited Attributes conspiring may produce Contrivances and frame Designs, which we Men must be unable (at least of our selves) sufficiently to understand, and to reach to the bottom of. And by this way of arguing it may be made to appear, That there may be many things relating to the Deity above the reach of unenlightned humane Reason. Not that I affirm *all* these things to be in their own Nature incomprehensible to us (though *some* of them may be so,) when they are once propos'd; but that Reason by its own light could not discover them particular-

ticularly, and therefore it must owe its
 knowledge of them to Divine Revela-
 tion. And if God vouchsafes to dis-
 close those things to us, since not only
 he must needs know about his own Na-
 ture, Attributes, &c. what we cannot
 possibly know unless he tells us, and
 since we know, that whatever he tells
 us is infallibly true, we have abundant
 Reason to believe rather what he de-
 clares to us concerning Himself and
 Divine things, than what we should con-
 clude or guess about them by Analogy
 to things of a nature infinitely distant
 from his, or by Maxims fram'd accord-
 ing to the nature of inferior Beings. If
 therefore he clearly reveal to us, That
 there is in the Godhead, Three distinct
 Persons, and yet that God is One, we,
 that think our selves bound to believe
 God's Testimony in all other Cases,
 ought sure not to disbelieve it concern-
 ing himself, but to acknowledge, that in
 an unparallel'd and incomprehensible
 Being, there may be a manner of Ex-
 istence not to be parallel'd in any other
 Being, though it should never be under-
 stood by us Men, who cannot clearly
 comprehend, how in our selves two such
 distant Natures as that of a gross Body
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and an immaterial Spirit, should be united so as to make up one Man. In such cases therefore as we are now speaking of, there must indeed be something that looks like captivating ones Reason, but 'tis a submission that Reason it self obliges us to make; and he that in such points as these believes rather what the Divine Writings teach him, than what he would think if they had never inform'd him, does not renounce or enslave his Reason, but suffers it to be Pupil to an Omniscient and Infallible Instructor, who can teach him such things, as neither his own meer Reason, nor any others could ever have discovered to him.

I thought to have here dismiss'd this Proposition, but I must not omit to give it a confirmation afforded me by chance (or rather Providence:) For, since I writ the last Paragraph, resuming a Philosophical Enquiry, I met in prosecuting it with a couple of Testimonies of the truth of what I was lately telling you, which are given not by Divines or Schoolmen, but by a couple of famous Mathematicians, that have both led the way to many of the Modern Philosophers to shake off the reverence wont

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to be born to the Authority of great Names, and have advanc'd Reason in a few years more than such as *Vaninus* and *Pomponatius* would do in many Ages; and have always boldly, and sometimes successfully attempted to explain intelligibly those things, which others scrupled not either openly or tacitly to confess inexplicable.

The first of these Testimonies I met with in a little *French* Treatise put out by some Mathematician, who, though he conceals his Name, appears by his way of writing to be a great *Virtuoso*, and takes upon him to give his Readers in *French* the new thoughts of *Galileo*, by making that the Title of his Book. This Writer then speaking of a Paradox (which I but recite) of *Galileo's*, that makes a point equal to a Circle, adds,

Pag. 22, 23. Et per consequent l'on peut dire, i. e. and consequently one may say, that all Circles are equal between themselves, since each of them is equal to a point. For though the imagination be overpower'd by this Idea or Notion; yet Reason will suffer it self to be persuaded of it. I know (continues he) divers other excellent Persons (besides Galileo) who conclude
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the same thing by other ways, but all are constrain'd to acknowledge, that *indivisible* and *infinite* are things that do so swallow up the mind of Man, that he scarce knows what to pitch on, when he contemplates them. For it will follow from *Galilao's* Speculation, &c. which passage I have cited, to shew you, that *Galilao* is not the only Philosopher and Mathematician who has confess'd his Reason quite passed about the Attributes of what is Infinite.

The other Testimony I mention'd to you, is that of the excellent *Des-Cartes* in the second Part of his Principles of Philosophy, where Numb. 34. speaking of the Circle to be made by Matter moving through places still lesser and lesser, he has this ingenious acknowledgment; *Fatendum tamen est* (says he) *in motu isto aliquid reperiri, quod mens quidem nostra percipit esse verum, sed tamen quo pacto fiat non comprehendit, nempe Divisionem quarundam particularum Materiae in infinitum, sive indefinitam, atque in tot partes ut nulla cogitatione determinare possimus tam exiguum, quin intelligamus ipsam in alias adhuc minores reipsa esse divisam.* And in the Close of the next Paragraph, he gives

gives this for a Reason, why, though we cannot comprehend this indefinite division, yet we ought not to doubt of the truth of it, That we discern it to be of that kind of things that cannot be compriz'd by our minds as being but finite.

If then such bold and piercing Wits, and such excellent Mathematicians are forc'd to confess, that not only their own Reason, but that of Mankind may be pass'd and non-plus'd about *Quantity*, which is an Object of contemplation Natural, nay, Mathematical, and which is the Subject of the rigid Demonstrations of pure Mathematicks; why should we think it unfit to be believ'd, and to be acknowledg'd, that in the Attributes of God, who is essentially an Infinite Being, and an *Ens singularissimum*, and in divers other Divine things, of which we can have no knowledge without Revelation, there should be some things, that our Finite understandings cannot, especially in this life, clearly comprehend.

SECT.

S E C T. III.

To this Consideration, I shall for Affinities sake subjoin another, which I leave to your Liberty to look upon, as a distinct one, or as an Enlargement and Application of the former.

I consider then, that there is a great difference between a Doctrines being repugnant to the general and well-weigh'd Rules or Dictates of Reason, in the forming of which Rules it may be suppos'd to have been duly consider'd; and its disagreeing with Axioms, at the Establishment whereof the Doctrine in Question was probably never thought on. There are several Rules that pass current ev'n among the most Learned Men, and which are indeed of very great use when restrain'd to those things whence they took their Rise, and others of the like nature; which yet ought not to overthrow those Divine Doctrines that seem not consonant to them. For the Framers of these Rules having generally built them upon the Observations they had made of Natural and Moral things, since (as we lately argu-
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ed) Reason it self cannot but acknowledge, there are some things out of its Sphere, we must not think it impossible, that there may be Rules, which will hold in all inferior Beings for which they were made; and yet not reach to that infinite and most singular Being call'd God, and to some Divine matters which were not taken into Consideration when those Rules were fram'd. And indeed, if we consider God as the Author of the Universe, and the free Establisher of the Laws of Motion, whose general Concourse is necessary to the Conservation and Efficacy of every particular Physical Agent, we cannot but acknowledge, that by withholding his Concourse or changing these Laws of Motion, which depend perfectly upon his Will, he may invalidate most, if not all, the Axioms and Theorems of Natural Philosophy: These supposing the Course of Nature, and especially the Establish'd Laws of Motion among the parts of the Universal Matter, as those upon which all the *Phænomena* of Nature depend. 'Tis a Rule in Natural Philosophy, that *Causæ necessariae semper agunt quantum possunt*; But it will not follow from thence, that the Fire must neces-

necessarily burn *Daniel's* three Compaⁿions or their Cloaths, that were cast by the *Babylonian* King's Command into the midst of a Burning fiery Furnace, when the Author of Nature was pleas'd to withdraw his Concourse to the Operation of the flames, or supernaturally to defend against them the Bodies that were expos'd to them. That Men once truly dead cannot be brought to life again, hath been in all Ages the Doctrine of meer Philosophers; but though this be true according to the Course of Nature, yet it will not follow but that the contrary may be true, if God interpose either to recall the departed Soul and reconjoin it to the Body, if the Organization of this be not too much vitiated, or by so altering the Fabrick of the matter whereof the Carcass consists, as to restore it to a fitness for the Exercise of the Functions of Life. Agreeably to this let me observe to you, that, though it be unreasonable to believe a Miraculous Effect when attributed onely to a meer Physical Agent; yet the same thing may reasonably be believ'd, when ascrib'd to God, or to Agents assisted with his absolute or supernatural Power. That a Man born

blind should in a trice recover his sight upon the Application of Clay and Spit-
 tle, would justly appear incredible, if
 the Cure were ascrib'd to one that act-
 ed as a meer Man; but it will not fol-
 low, that it ought to be incredible, that
 the Son of God should work it. And
 the like may be said of all the Miracles
 perform'd by Christ, and those Apostles
 and other Disciples of his, that acted by
 virtue of a Divine Power and Commis-
 sion. For in all these and the like Ca-
 ses it suffices not to make ones Belief ir-
 rational, that the things believ'd are im-
 possible to be true according to the
 course of Nature; but it must be shewn,
 either that they are impossible even to
 the Power of God to which they are
 ascrib'd, or that the Records, we have
 of them, are not sufficient to beget Be-
 lief in the nature of a Testimony; which
 latter Objection against these Relations
 is Forreign to our present Discourse.
 And as the Rules about the power of
 Agents will not all of them hold in
 God; so I might shew the like, if I had
 time, concerning some of his other At-
 tributes: Insomuch that ev'n in point of
 Justice, wherein we think we may free-
 liest make Estimates of what may or
 may

may not be done, there may be *some* cases, wherein God's supreme Dominion, as Maker and Governor of the World, places him above *some* of those Rules; I say, *some*, for I say not above *all* those Rules of Justice which oblige all inferior Beings, without excepting the greatest and most absolute Monarchs themselves. I will not give Examples of his Power of Pardoning or Remitting Penalties, which is but a relaxing of his own Right; but will rather give an instance in his Power of afflicting and exterminating Men, without any Provocation given him by them. I will not here enter upon the Controversie *de Jure Dei in Creaturas*, upon what it is founded, and how far it reaches. For, without making my self a party in that Quarrel, I think, I may safely say, that God by his right of Dominion, might, without any violation of the Laws of Justice, have destroy'd and ev'n annihilated *Adam* and *Eve* before they had eaten of the forbidden Fruit, or had been commanded to abstain from it. For Man being as much and as intirely God's Workmanship as any of the other Creatures; unless God had oblig'd himself by some promise or pact to limit the

Exercise of his absolute dominion over him, God was no more bound to preserve *Adam* and *Eve* long alive, than he was to preserve a Lamb, or a Pigeon; and therefore, as we allow, that he might justly recall the Lives he had given those innocent Creatures when he pleas'd, (as actually he often order'd them to be kill'd and burn'd in Sacrifice to him:) so he might, for the declaration of his Power to the Angels, or for other Reasons, have suddenly taken away the Lives of *Adam* and *Eve*, though they had never offended him. And upon the same grounds he might without Injustice have annihilated, I say not, damn'd their Souls; he being no more bound to continue Existence to a Nobler, than a less noble Creature: As he is no more bound to keep an *Eagle* than an *Oyster* always alive. I know, there is a difference betwixt Gods resuming a Being he lent *Adam*, and his doing the same to inferior Creatures: But that disparity, if it concern any of his Attributes, will concern some other than his Justice; which allow'd him to resume at pleasure the Being he had only lent them, or lay any Affliction on them that were lesser than that Good could coun-

countervail. But mentioning this instance only occasionally, I shall not prosecute it any further, but rather mind you of the Result of this and the foregoing Consideration; which is, That Divinely reveal'd Truths may *seem* to be repugnant to the dictates of Reason, when they do *but seem* to be so: Nor does Christianity oblige us to question such Rules as to the cases they were fram'd for, but the application of them to the Nature of God, who has already been truly said to be *Ens singularissimum*, and to his absolute Power and Will; so that we do not reject the Rules we speak of, but rather limit them; and when we have restrain'd them to their due bounds, we may safely admit them.

From Mens not taking notice of, or not pondering this necessary limitation of many Axioms deliver'd in general terms, seems to have proceeded a great Error, which has made so many Learned Men presume to say, That this or that thing is true in Philosophy, but false in Divinity, or on the contrary: As for instance, that a Virgin, continuing such, may have a Child, is look'd upon as an Article which Theology as-

serts to be true , and Philosophy pronounces impossible. But the Objection is grounded upon a mistake, which might have been prevented by wording the Propositions more warily and fully. For though we grant, that, Physically speaking, 'tis false, that a Virgin can bring forth a Child ; yet that signifies no more, than that, according to the course of Nature, such a thing cannot come to pass ; but speaking absolutely and indefinitely, without confining the Effect to meer Physical Agents, it may safely be deny'd that Philosophy pronounces it impossible that a Virgin should be a Mother. For why should the Author of Nature be confin'd to the ways of working of dependent and finite Agents? And to apply the Answer to the Divines that hold the Opinion I oppose ; I shall demand, why God may not out of the substance of a Woman form a Man, without the help of a Man ; as well as at the beginning of the substance of a Man he form'd a Woman without the concurrence of a Woman? And so, that *Iron* being a Body far heavier, (*in specie*, as they speak,) will, if upheld by no other Body, sink in water, is a Truth in Natural Philosophy ;
but

but since Phyicks themselves lead Men to the acknowledgment of a God, 'tis not repugnant to Reason, that, if God please to interpose his Power, he may (as in *Elisha's* case) make *Iron* swim, either by withholding his concurrence to the Agents, whatever they be that cause Gravity in Bodies, or perhaps by other ways unknown to us; since a vigorous Loadstone may, as I have more than once try'd, keep a piece of Iron, which it touches not, swimming in the Air, though this thin Body must contribute far less, than water would, to the sustaining it aloft.

That strict Philosopher *Des Cartes*, who has with great Wit and no less Applause attempted to carry the Mechanical Powers of matters higher than any of the Modern Philosophers; this Naturalist, I say, that ascribes so great a power to *Matter* and *Motion*, was so far from thinking, that what was impossible to them, must be so to God too, that, though he were urg'd by a learned Adversary with an Argument as likely as any to give him a strong Temptation to limit the Omnipotence of God; yet ev'n on this occasion he scruples not to make this ingenious and wary Acknowledg-

ledg-

ledgment, and that in a private Letter ;
*For my part, says he, I think we ought
 never to say of any thing that 'tis impos-
 sible to God. For all that is true and
 good being dependent on his Almightyness,
 I dare not so much as say, that God can-*

not make a Mountain without a Valley, or
 Volum. second cannot make it true, that one
 Lettre vi. and two shall not make three;

*but I say only, that he has gi-
 ven me a Soul of such a nature, that I can-
 not conceive a Mountain without a Valley,
 nor that the Aggregate of one and of two
 shall not make three, &c. and I say only,
 that such things imply a Contradiction in
 my Conception.*

*And consonantly to
 this in his Principles of Philosophy he
 gives on a certain occasion this useful
 Caution,—*

Parte prima.
 Artic. 24.

*Quod ut satis tuto & sine er-
 randi periculo aggrediamur,
 eâ nobis cautela est utendum,
 ut semper quàm maxime re-
 cordemur, & Deum Autorem rerum esse
 infinitum, & Nos omnino finitos.*

SECT.

S E C T. IV.

In the next place, I think we ought to distinguish between Reason consider'd in it self, and Reason consider'd in the Exercise of it, by this or that Philosopher, or by this or that Man, or by this or that Company or Society of Men, whether all of one sect, or of more.

If you will allow me to borrow a School-phrase, I shall express this more shortly by saying I distinguish between Reason *in Abstracto*, and *in Concreto*. To clear this matter, we may consider, That whatever you make the Faculty of Reason to be in it self, yet the Ratiocinations it produces are made by Men, either singly reasoning, or concurring in the same Ratiocinations and Opinions; and consequently, if these Men do not make the best use of their Reasoning Faculty, it will not be necessary, that what thwarts *their* Ratiocinations, must likewise thwart the Principles or the Dictates of *right Reason*. For, Man having a Will and Affections as well as an Intellect, though our Dijudications and Tenents ought indeed in mat-

matters speculative) to be made and pitch'd upon by our unbias'd Understandings; yet really our Intellectual Weaknesses, or our Prejudices, or Prepossession by Custom, Education, &c. our Interest, Passions, Vices, and I know not how many other things, have so great and swaying an Influence on them, that there are very few Conclusions that we make, or Opinions that we espouse, that are so much the pure Results of our Reason, that no personal Disability, Prejudice, or Fault, has any Interest in them.

This I have elsewhere
About the Diversity of Religions. more amply discours'd of on another occasion; wherefore I shall now add but this, That the distinction, I have been proposing, does (if I mistake not) reach a great deal further than you may be aware of. For not only whole Sects, whether in Religion or Philosophy, are in many cases subject to Prepossessions, Envy, Ambition, Interest, and other misleading things, as well as single Persons; but, which is more considerable to our present purpose, the very Body of Mankind may be embued with Prejudices, and Errors, and that from their Child.

Childhood, and some also ev'n from their Birth, by which means they continue undiscern'd and consequently unreform'd.

This you will think an Accusation as bold as high; but to let you see, that the Philosophers, you most respect, have made the same Observation, though not apply'd to the same case, I must put you in mind, that Monsieur *Des Cartes* begins his Principles of Philosophy with taking notice, That, because we are born Children, we make divers unright Judgments of things, which afterwards are wont to continue with us all our Lives, and prove radicated Prejudices, that mislead our Judgments on so many occasions, that he elsewhere tells us, he found no other way to secure himself from their Influence, but once in his Life solemnly to doubt of the Truth of all that he had till then believ'd, in order to the re-examining of his former Dijudications. But I remember, our illustrious *Verulam* warrants a yet further Prejudice against many things that are wont to be look'd on as the suggestions of Reason. For having told us, That the Mind of Man is besieged with four differing kinds of Idols

or

of Phantasms, when he comes to enumerate them, he teaches, that there are not only such as Men get by Conversation and Discourse one with another, and such as proceed from the divers *Hypotheses* or *Theories* and *Opinions* of Philosophers, and from the perverse ways of Demonstration, and likewise such as are personal to this or that Man, proceeding from his Education, Temperament, Studies, &c. but such as he calls *Idola tribus*, because they are founded in humane Nature it self, and in the very Tribe or Nation of Mankind; and of these he particularly discourses of seven or eight; As that the Intellect of Man has an innate Propensity to suppose in things a greater order and equality than it finds, and that being unable to rest or acquiesce, it does alwayes tend further and further; to which he adds divers other innate prejudices of Mankind, which he solicitously as well as judiciously endeavors to remove.

Now, if not only single Philosophers, and particular Sects, but the whole body of Mankind be subject to be sway'd by innate and unheeded Prejudices and Proclivities to Errors about matters that are neither Divine, nor Moral, nor Poli-

Political, but Physical, where the attainment of Truth is exceeding pleasant to humane Nature, and is not attended with consequences distasteful to it: Why may not we justly suspect not only this or that Philosopher or particular Sect; but the generality of Men, of having some secret propensities to err about Divine things, and indispositions to admit Truths, which not only detect the weaknesses of our Nature, and our personal disabilities, and thereby offend or mortifie our Pride and our Ambition, but shine into the Mind with so clear as well as pure and chaste a light, as is proper both to discover to our selves and others our Vices and Faults, and oftentimes to cross our Designs and Interests?

And to this purpose we may take notice, that divers of those very Idols, which my Lord *Bacon* observes to besiege or pervert Mens Judgments in reference to things *Natural*, may probably have the same kind of influence (and that much stronger) on the minds of Men in reference to *Supernatural* things. Thus he takes notice, that, if some things have once pleas'd the Understanding, 'tis apt to draw all others to
com-

comport with, and give Suffrage, to them, though perhaps the Inducements to the contrary belief be either more numerous or more weighty. He observes also, that Man is apt to look upon his senses and other perceptions as the measures of things, and also, that the understanding of Man is not sincerely dispos'd to receive the light of Truth, but receives an infusion as it were of adventitious Colours (that disguise the light) from the Will and Affections, which makes him sooner believe those things that he is desirous should be true, and reject many others upon Accounts that do no way infer their being false. Now if we apply these things to Divine Truths (to which 'twere well they were less justly applicable) and consider, that in our Youth we generally converse but with things Corporeal, and are sway'd by Affections that have them for their Objects, we shall not much wonder, that Men should be very prone, *either* to frame such Notions of Divine things as they were wont to have about others of a far different and meaner nature; *or* else to reject them for not being Analogous to those things which they have been us'd to employ for the measures

fures of truth and falſity: And if we
 conſider the inbred pride of man, which
 is ſuch, that if we will believe the Sa-
 cred ſtory, ev'n *Adam* in *Paradiſe* affect-
 ed to be like God knowing good and
 evil, we ſhall not ſo much marvel, that
 almoſt every man in particular makes
 the Notions he has entertain'd already,
 and his Senſes, his Inclinations and his
 Interests, the Standards by which he
 eſtimates and judges of all other things,
 whether natural or reveal'd. And as
Heraclitus juſtly complain'd, that every
 man ſought the knowledge of natural
 things in the *Microcoſm*, that is, himſelf,
 and not in the *Macrocoſm*, the World;
 ſo we may juſtly complain, that men
 ſeek all the knowledge, they care to
 find, or will admit, either in theſe little
 worlds themſelves, or from that great
 World, the Universe; but not from
 the Omniscient Author of them both.
 And laſtly, if ev'n in purely Phyſical
 things, where one would not think it
 likely, that rational Beings ſhould ſeek
 Truth with any other deſigns than of
 finding and enjoying it, our Underſtand-
 ings are ſo univerſally byaſs'd, and im-
 poſ'd upon by our Wills and Affections;
 how can we admire, eſpecially if we
 D admit

admit the fall of our first Parents, that our Passions and Interests, and oftentimes our Vices should pervert our Intellects about those reveal'd Truths; divers of which we discern to be above our comprehensions, and more of which we find to be directly contrary to our Inclinations,

SECT. V.

And now 'twill be seasonable for me to tell you, That I think, there may be a great difference betwixt a things being contrary to *right Reason*, or so much as to any *true Philosophy*, and its being contrary to the *receiv'd Opinions* of Philosophers, or to the Principles or Conclusions of *this or that Sect* of them.

For here I may justly apply to my present purpose, what *Clemens Alexandrinus* judiciously said on another Occasion, that Philosophy was neither Peripatetical, nor Stoical, nor Epicurean, but whatsoever among all those several parties was fit to be approv'd.

And indeed if we survey the *Hypotheses* and Opinions of the several Sects of Philosophers, especially in those points

points wherein they hold things repugnant to Theological Truths , we shall find many of them so slightly grounded, and so disagreeing among themselves, that a severe and inquisitive Examiner would see little cause to admit them upon the bare Account of his being a Philosopher, though he did not see any to reject them upon the Account of his being a Christian. And in particular, as to the *Peripateticks*, who by invading all the Schools of *Europe* (and some in *Asia* and *Africk*) have made their Sect almost Catholick, and have produc'd divers of the famous Questioners of Christianity in the last Age, and the first part of this ; the World begins to be apace undeceiv'd as to many of their Doctrines , which were as confidently taught and believ'd for many Ages, as those that are repugnant to our Religion ; and there is now scarce any of the modern Philosophers that allow themselves the free use of their Reason, who believes any longer, *that* there is an Element of Fire lodg'd under the suppos'd Sphere of the Moon ; *that* Heaven consists of solid Orbs ; *that* all Celestial Bodies are ingenerable and incorruptible ; *that* the Heart, rather than

(30)
the Brain, is the Origine of Nerves;
that the torrid Zone is uninhabitable;
and I know not how many other Do-
ctrines of the *Aristotelians*, which our
Corpuscularian Philosophers think so lit-
tle worth being believ'd, that they
would censure him, that should now
think them worthy to be solicitously
confuted; upon which score, I presume
you will allow me to leave those and
divers others as weak Peripatetick con-
ceits, to fall by their own groundles-
ness.

But you will tell me, that the *Epicu-
reans*, and the *Somatici*, that will allow
nothing but Body in the World, nor no
Author of it but Chance, are more for-
midable Enemies to Religion than the
Aristotelians. And indeed I am apt to
think they are so, but they may well be
so without deserving to have any of
their Sects look'd upon as Philosophy it
self, there being none of them that I
know of, that maintain any Opinion in-
consistent with Christianity, that I think
may not be made appear to be also re-
pugnant to Reason, or at least not de-
monstrable by it. You will not expect
I should descend to particulars, especi-
ally having expressly discours'd against
the

the *Epicurean* Hypothesis of the Origine of the World in another Paper ; and therefore I shall observe to you in general, that the *Cartesian* Philosophers, who lay aside all Supernatural Revelation in their Inquiries into Natural things, do yet both think, and, as to the two first of them, very plausibly prove, the three grand Principles of *Epicurus*, That the little Bodies he calls Atoms are indivisible, That they all have their motion from themselves, and That there is a *vacuum* in *rerum natura*, to be as repugnant to meer Reason, as the *Epicureans* think the Notion of an Incorporeal Substance, or the Creation of the World, or the Immortality of the Soul. And as for the new *Somatici*, such as Mr. *Hobbs* (and some few others) by what I have yet seen of his, I am not much tempted to forsake any thing that I look'd upon as a Truth before, ev'n in Natural Philosophy it self, upon the score of what he (though never so confidently) delivers, by which hitherto I see not, that he hath made any great discovery either of new Truths, or old Errors. An Honourable Member of the Royal Society, hath elsewhere purposely shewn, how ill he has prov'd his

own Opinions about the Air, and some other Physical Subjects, and how ill he has understood and oppos'd those of his Adversary. But to give you in this place a *Specimen* how little their repugnancy to his Principles or Natural Philosophy, ought to affright us from those Theological Doctrines they contradict, I shall here (but not in the Body of this Discourse, for fear of too much interrupting it) examine the fundamental Maxim of his whole Physicks, *That nothing is removed but by a Body contiguous and moved*; it having been already shewn (by the Gentleman newly mention'd) that, as to the next to it, which is, *that there is no vacuum*, whether it be *true* or no, he has not prov'd it.

If no Body can possibly be moved but by a Body contiguous and moved, as Mr. *Hobbs* teaches ; I demand, How there comes to be Local motion in the World ? For, *either* all the portions of matter that compos'd the Universe, have motion belonging to their Nature, which the *Epicureans* affirm'd for their Atoms ; or some parts of Matter have this motive power, and some have not ; or else none of them have it, but all of them are naturally devoid of Motion.

If

If it be granted, that Motion does naturally belong to all parts of Matter, the dispute is at an end, the concession quite overthrowing the *Hypothesis*. If it be said, that naturally some portions of Matter have Motion, and others not, then the Assertion will not be Universally true: For though it may hold in the parts that are naturally moveless or quiescent, yet it will not do so in the others, there being nothing that may shew a necessity, why a Body, to which Motion is natural, should not be capable of moving without being put into motion by another contiguous and moved. And if there be no Body to which Motion is natural, but every Body needs an outward movent, it may well be demanded, How there comes to be any thing Locally mov'd in the World; which yet constant and obvious experience demonstrates, and Mr. *Hobbs* himself cannot deny. For if no part of Matter have any Motion but what it must owe to another that is contiguous to it, and being it self in Motion impels it; and if there be nothing but *Matter* in the World, how can there come to be any Motion amongst Bodies, since they neither have it upon the score of their own

nature, nor can receive it from external Agents. If Mr. *Hobbs* should reply, that the Motion is impress'd upon any of the parts of the Matter by *God*, he will say that which I most readily grant to be true, but will not serve *his* turn, if he would speak congruously to his own *Hypothesis*. For I demand, Whether this Supreme Being, that the Assertion has recourse to, be a Corporeal or an Incorporeal Substance? If it be the latter, and yet be the efficient Cause of Motion in Bodies, then it will not be Universally true, that whatsoever Body is moved, is so by a *Body* contiguous and moved. For, in our supposition, the Bodies that God moves either immediately, or by the intervention of any other Immaterial Being, are not moved by a *Body* contiguous, but by an *Incorporeal* Spirit. But because Mr. *Hobbs*, in some Writings of his, is believed to think the very Notion of an Immaterial Substance to be absurd, and to involve a Contradiction, and because it may be subsum'd, that if God be not an Immaterial Substance, he must by Consequence be a Material and Corporeal one, there being no *Medium Negationis*, or third Substance that is none of those
two.

two: I answer, That, if this be said, and so that Mr. *Hobbs's* Deity be a Corporeal one, the same difficulty will recurr, that I urg'd before. For this Body will not, by Mr. *Hobbs's* calling or thinking it *divine*, cease to be a true Body, and consequently a portion of *Divine* Matter will not be able to move a portion of our *Mundane* Matter without it be it self contiguous and moved; which it cannot be but by another portion of *Divine* Matter so qualified to impress a Motion, nor this again but by another portion.

And besides, that it will breed a strange confusion in rendring the Physical Causes of things, unless an expedient be found to teach us how to distinguish accurately the *Mundane* Bodies from the *Divine* (which will perhaps prove no easie task ;) I see not yet, how this *Corporeal Deity* will make good the *Hypothesis* I examine. For I demand, How this *Divine Matter* comes to have this Local Motion that is ascrib'd to it? If it be answer'd, That it hath it from its own Nature, without any other Cause; since the *Epicureans* affirm the same of their Atoms, or meerly *Mundane* Matter, I demand, How the Truth
of

of Mr. *Hobbs's* Opinion will appear to me, to whom it seems as likely by the *Phænomena* of Nature that occur, that *Mundane* Matter should have a congenit Motion, as that any thing that is Corporeal can be *God*, and capable of moving it; which to be, it must, for ought we know, have its Subsistence divided into as many minute parts, as there are Corpuscles and Particles in the World that move separately from their neighbouring ones. And, to draw towards a Conclusion, I say, that these minute *Divine* Bodies, that thus moved those portions of *Mundane* Matter, concerning which Mr. *Hobbs* denies that they can be moved but by Bodies contiguous and moved, these *Divine* Substances, I say, are, according to the late supposition, true Bodies, and yet are moved themselves not by Bodies contiguous and moved, but by a Motion which must be *Innate*, deriv'd or flowing from their very essence or nature, since no such Body is pretended to have a Being as cannot be refer'd as a portion, either to the *Mundane*, or the *Divine* Matter. In short, since Local Motion is to be found in one, if not in both, of these two Matters, it must be natural to (at least
some

some parts of) one of them in Mr. *Hobbs's* Hypothesis; for, though he should grant an *Immaterial* Being, yet it could not produce a Motion in any Body, since, according to him, no Body can be moved but by another *Body* contiguous and mov'd.

As then to this grand Position of Mr. *Hobbs*, though, if it were cautiously propos'd as it is by *Des Cartes*, it may perhaps be safely admitted, because *Cartesius* acknowledges, the first Impulse that set Matter a moving, and the Conservation of Motion once begun, to come from God; yet, as 'tis crudely propos'd by the favourers of Mr. *Hobbs*, I am so far from seeing any such cogent Proof for it, (as were to be wish'd for a Principle on which he builds so much, and which yet is not at all evident by its own light,) that I see no competent Reason to admit it.

I expect your Friend should here oppose to what I have been saying, that formerly recited Sentence, that is so commonly employ'd in the Schools as well of Divines as of Philosophers: That such or such an Opinion is true in Divinity, but false in Philosophy; or on the contrary, Philosophically true, but Theologically false. Upon

Upon what Warrant those, that are wont to employ such Expressions, ground their Practice, I leave to them to make out; but as to the Objection it self, as it supposes these ways of speaking to be well grounded, give me leave to consider, That *Philosophy* may signify two things, which I take to be very differing.

For *first* 'tis most commonly employ'd to signify a System or Body of the Opinions and other Doctrines of the particular Sect of those Philosophers that make use of the Word. As when an *Aristotelian* talks of Philosophy, he usually means the *Peripatetick*, as an *Epicurean* do's the *Atomical*, or a *Platonist* the *Platonick*.

But we may also in a more general and no less just Acception of the term, understand by Philosophy, a Comprehension of all those Truths or Doctrines, which the natural Reason of man, freed from Prejudices and Partiality, and assisted by Learning, Attention, Exercise, Experiments, &c. can manifestly make out, or by necessary consequence deduce from clear and certain Principles.

This

This being briefly premis'd, I must in the next place put you in mind of what I formerly observ'd to you, that many Opinions are maintain'd by this or that Sect of Christians, or perhaps by the Divinity-Schools of more than one or two Sects, which either do not at all belong to the Christian Religion, or at least ought not to be look'd upon as parts of it, but upon supposition, that the Philosophical Principles and Ratiocinations, upon which, and not upon express or meer Revelation, they are presum'd to be founded, are agreable to right Reason.

And having premis'd these two things, I now answer more directly to the Objection; that, if Philosophy be taken in the first sense above-mention'd, its teaching things repugnant to Theology, especially taking this word in the more large and vulgar sense of it, will not cogently conclude any thing against the Christian Religion. But, if Philosophy be taken in the latter sense for true Philosophy, and Divinity only for a System of those Articles that are clearly reveal'd as Truths in the Scriptures; I shall not allow any thing to be false in Philosophy so understood that is true in
Di-

Divinity so explain'd, till I see some clearer Proof of it than I have yet met with. I have had occasion in the foregoing Discourse, to say something, that may be apply'd to the Point under debate; and in the following part of this Letter I shall have Occasion to touch upon it again: And therefore I shall now say but this in short, That 'tis not likely, that God, being the Author of Reason as well as Revelation, should make it mens Duty to believe as true that which there is just Reason to reject as false.

There is indeed a Sense, wherein the Phrases, I disapprove, may be tolerated. For if by saying, that such a thing is true in Divinity, but false in Philosophy, it were meant, that if the Doctrine were propos'd to a meer Philosopher, to be judg'd of according to the Principles of his Sect, or at most according to what he, being suppos'd not to have heard of the Christian Religion, or had it duly propos'd to him, would reject it, the Phrase might be allow'd, or at least indulg'd. But then we must consider, that the Reason why such a Philosopher would reject the Articles of Christian Faith, would not be, because they could
by

by no *Mediums* be possibly prov'd, but because these Doctrines being founded upon a Revelation, which he is presum'd either not to have heard of, or not to have had sufficiently propos'd to him, he must, as a Rational man, refuse to believe them upon the score of their Prooflessness. And the same Philosopher, supposing him to be a true one, though he will be very wary, how he admits any thing as true that is not prov'd, if it fall properly under the cognizance of Philosophy; yet he will be as wary, how he pronounces things to be false or impossible in matters which he discerns to be beyond the reach of meer natural Reason, especially if Sober and Learned men do very confidently pretend to know something of those matters by Divine Revelation, which though he will not easily believe to be a true one, yet he will admit, in case it should be prov'd true, to be a fit *Medium* to evince Truths, which, upon the Account of meer natural Light, he could not discover or embrace. To be short, such a Philosopher would indeed reject some of the Articles of our Faith hypothetically, *i. e.*
upon

upon supposition that he need employ no other Touchstone to examine them by, than the Principles and Dictates of *Natural Philosophy*, that he is acquainted with (upon which score I shall hereafter shew, that divers strange Chymical Experiments, and other Discoveries would also be rejected;) but yet he would not pronounce them false, but upon supposition that the Arguments, by which they lay claim to *Divine Revelation*, are incompetent in their kind. For as he will not easily believe any thing within the Sphere of Nature that agrees not with the Establish'd Laws of it; so he will not easily adventure to pronounce one way or other in matters that are *beyond* the Sphere of Nature: He will indeed (as he justly may,) expect as full a Proof of the Divine Testimony that is pretended, as the Nature of the thing requires and allows; but he will not be backward to acknowledge, that God, to whom that Testimony is ascrib'd, is able to know and to do many more things than we can explicate *How He* can discover, or imagine *How any Physical Agent* can perform.

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[Since I propos'd to you this fifth Consideration, I happen'd to light on a passage in *Des Cartes's* Principles, which affords of what I have been discovering the Suffrage of a Principi. Philosoph. part. prima. Artic. 25. Philosopher, that is wont to be accus'd of excluding Theology too scrupulously out of his Philosophy. His words are so full to my present Purpose, that I need not, to accommodate them to it, alter one of them, and therefore shall transcribe them just as they lie: *Si fortè nobis Deus de seipso, vel aliis, aliquid revelet, quod naturales Ingenii nostri vires excedat, qualia sunt mysteria Incarnationis & Trinitatis, non recusabimus illa credere, quamvis non clarè intelligamus, nec ullo modo mirabimur, multa esse tum in immensa ejus natura, tum etiam in rebus ab eo creatis, quæ captum nostrum excedant.]*

And let me add on this occasion, that whereas the main Scruples that are said to be suggested by Philosophy against some mysterious Articles of Religion, are grounded upon this, that the *Modus*, as they speak, of those things is not clearly conceivable, or at least is very hardly explicable; these objections are not always so weighty as perhaps by the

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confidence wherewith they are urg'd, you may think them. For whereas I observ'd to you already, that there are divers things maintain'd by School Divines, which are not contained in the Scripture, that observation is chiefly applicable to the things we are considering; since in several of these nice Points, the Scripture affirms only the thing, and the Schoolmen are pleas'd to add the *Modus*: And as by their unwarrantable boldness the School Divines determine many things without Book; so the scruples and objections that are made against what the Scripture really delivers, are usually grounded upon the Erroneous or Precarious Assertions of the School Philosophers, who often give the Title of Metaphysical Truths to Conceits that do very little deserve that name, and to which a rigid Philosopher would perhaps think that of Sublime Nonsense more proper. But of this I elsewhere say enough, and therefore shall now proceed to the consideration I chiefly intended, *viz.* That from hence, *That the Modus of a revealed Truth is either very hard, or not at all explicable*, it will not necessarily follow, that the thing it self is irrational, provided

vided the positive Proofs of its Truth be sufficient in their kind. For ev'n in Natural things Philosophers themselves do and must admit several things, whereof they cannot clearly *explicate* or perhaps *conceive* the *Modus*. I will not here mention the Origine of Substantial Forms as an instance in this kind, because though it may be a fit one as to the Peripatetick Philosophy; yet not admitting that there are any such Beings, I will take no further notice of them; especially because for a clear Instance to our present purpose, we need go no further than our selves, and consider the Union of the Soul and Body in man. For who can Physically explain, *both* how an immaterial Substance should be able to guide or determine, and excite the motions of a Body, and yet not be able to produce motion in it (as by dead Palsies, great Faintnesses, &c. it appears the Soul cannot,) *and*, which is far more difficult, how an incorporeal Substance should receive such Impressions from the motions of a Body, as to be thereby affected with real pain and pleasure; to which I elsewhere add some other properties of this Union, which, though not taken notice of, are

perhaps no less difficult to be conceiv'd and accounted for. For how can we comprehend, that there should be *naturally* such an intimate Union betwixt two such distant Substances as an (Incorporeal) Spirit and a Body, as that the former may not, when it pleases, quit the latter, which cannot possibly have any strings or chains that can tye or fasten to it that which has no Body on which they may take hold. And if there shew, that 'tis full as difficult, Physically to explicate how these so differing Beings come to be united, as how they are kept from parting at pleasure, both the one and the other being to be resolv'd into the meer appointment of God. And if to avoid the abstruseness of the *Modus* of this Conjunction betwixt the Rational Soul and the Humane Body, it be said, as 'tis by the *Epicureans*, that the former is but a certain Contexture of the finer and most subtle parts of the latter, the formerly propos'd abstruseness of the Union betwixt the Soul and the Body will indeed be shifted off; but 'twill be by a Doctrine that will not much relieve us. For those that will allow no Soul in Man but what is Corporeal, have a *Modus* to explain,

plain that I doubt they will alwayes leave a Riddle. For of such I desire, that they would explain to me, (who know no effects that Matter can produce but by Local Motion and Rest, and the consequences of it,) how meer Matter, (let them suppose it as fine as they please, and contrive it as well as they can) can make Syllogisms, and have Conceptions of Universals, and invent speculative Sciences and Demonstrations, and in a word do all those things which are done by Man, and by no other Animal; and he that shall intelligibly explicate to me the *Modus* of matters, framing Theories and Ratiocinations, will, I confess, not only instruct me, but surprize me too.

And now give me leave to make this short Reflection on what has been said in this Section, compar'd with what formerly I said in the first Section: That if on the one hand we lay aside all the Irrational Opinions that the Schoolmen and other bold Writers have unwarrantably father'd on Christian Religion, and on the other hand all the Erroneous Conceits repugnant to Christianity, which the Schoolmen and others have prooflessly father'd upon Philosophy, the

seeming Contradictions betwixt solid Divinity and true Philosophy will appear to be but *few*, as I think the *Real* ones will be found to be *none at all*.

SECT. VI.

The next Consideration I shall propose, is, That a thing may, if singly or precisely consider'd, appear Unreasonable, which yet may be very Credible, if consider'd as a Part of, or a manifest Consequence from, a Doctrine that is highly so.

Of this I could give you more Instances in several Arts and Sciences, than I think fit to be here specifi'd; and therefore I shall content my self to mention three or four.

When *Astronomers* tell us that the Sun, which seems not to us a foot broad, nor considerably bigger than the Moon, is above a hundred and threescore times bigger than the whole Globe of the Earth, which yet is forty times greater than the Moon; the thing thus nakedly propos'd, seems very Incredible. But yet, because Astronomers very skilful in their Art, have, by finding the Semi-diameter

diameter of the Earth, and observing the Parallaxes of the Planets, concluded the proportion of these three Bodies to be such as has been mention'd, or thereabout, ev'n Learn'd and Judicious Men of all sorts, (Philosophers, Divines, and others,) think it not Credulity to admit what they affirm.

So the relations of Earthquakes that have reach'd divers hundreds of miles; of Eruptions of fire, that have at once overflowed and burn'd vast Scopes of Land; of the blowing up of Mountains by their own fires; of the Casting up of new Islands in the Sea it self, and other *Prodigies of too unquestionable Truth*; (for I know what work Ignorance and Superstition have made about other Prodigies:) If they were attested but by slight and ordinary Witness, they would be judg'd Incredible, but we scruple not to believe them, when the Relations are attested with such Circumstances, as make the Testimony as strong as the things attested are strange.

If ever you have consider'd, what *Clavius*, and divers other Geometricians teach upon the sixteenth *Proposition* of the third Book of *Euclide*, (which

contains a Theorem about the Tangent and the Circumference of a Circle,) you cannot but have taken notice, that there are scarce greater Paradoxes deliver'd by Philosophers or *Divines*, than you will find asserted by *Geometricians* themselves. And though of late the Learned Jesuit *Tacquet*, and some rigid *Mathematicians*, have question'd divers of those things, yet ev'n what some of these severe Examiners confess to be Geometrically demonstrable from that Proposition, contains things so strange, that Philosophers themselves, that are not well acquainted with that Proposition and its Corollaries, can scarce look upon them as other than Incomprehensible, or at least Incredible, things; which yet, as improbable as they are consider'd in themselves, ev'n rigid Demonstrators refuse not to admit, because they are legitimately deducible from an Acknowledg'd truth.

And so also among the *Magnetical Phænomena* there are divers things, which being nakedly propos'd must seem altogether unfit to be believ'd, as indeed having nothing like them in all nature; whereas those that are vers'd in Magnetick Philosophy, ev'n before they

they have made particular Trials of them, will look upon them as credible, because, how great Paradoxes soever they may seem to others, they are consonant and consequent to the Doctrine of Magnetism, whose grand Axioms (from what cause soever Magnetisms are to be deriv'd) are sufficiently manifest; and therefore a Magnetical Philosopher would not, though an ordinary Philosopher would, think it unreasonable to believe, that one part of the same Loadstone should draw a Needle to it, and the other part drive the same Needle from it; and that the Needle in a Seamans Compass, after having been carry'd perhaps many hunder'd Leagues (through differing Climates, and in stormy weather) without varying its Declination, may upon a sudden, without any manifest cause, point at some part of the Horizons several whole degrees distant from that which it pointed to before. To which might here be added divers other scarce credible things, which either others or I have try'd about Magnetical Bodies; but I shall hereafter have occasion to take notice of some of them in a fitter place.

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Wherefore, when something deliver'd in or clearly deduc'd from Scripture is objected against, as a thing which it is not reasonable to believe, we must not only consider, whether, if it were not deliver'd in that Book, we should upon its own single Account think it fit or unworthy to be believ'd; but whether or no it is so improbable, that 'tis more fit to be believ'd, that all the proofs that can be brought for the Authority of the Scripture are to be Rejected, than that this thing which comes manifestly recommended to our belief by that Authority, is worthy to be Admitted: I say, *manifestly recommended by that Authority*, because that, if the thing be not clearly deliver'd in Scripture, or be not clearly and cogently deduc'd thence, so far as that clearness is wanting, so far the thing it self wants of the full Authority of the Scripture, to impose it on our assent.

[Perhaps it will procure what I have said the better Reception, if I add a couple of Testimonies not of any modern *Bigots*, no nor of any devout *Fathers* of the Church; but of two modern Authors of Sects, and who in their kinds have been thought extremely
subtle

subtle Reasoners, and no less rigid Ex-
acters of Reason in whatever they ad-
mitted.

The first passage I shall alledge, is the
Confession of *Socinus*, who in his second
Epistle to *Andreas Dudithius*, speaks
thus: *Fam verò ut rem in paucis confe-
ram, quod ad meas aliorumve opiniones,
quæ novitatis præ se ferunt speciem, attinet,
mibi ita videtur; si detur, Scripturam sa-
cræ ejus esse Authoritatis, ut nullo modo
ei contradici possit, ac de interpretati-
one illius omnis duntaxat sit scrupulus,*
(which he allows) *nihil, utut verisimile
aut ratione conclusum videatur, afferri con-
tra eas possit quod ullarum sit virium,
quotiescunque illæ sententiis atque verbis
illius Libri aut rationibus liquidò inde de-
ductis probatæ atque assertæ fuerint.* Which
confession of *Socinus* is surpass'd by
that of his Champion *Smalcus*, to be
produc'd elsewhere in this Paper. The
other passage I met with in
the Excellent Monsieur Des
Cartes's Principles of Philo-
sophy, where discoursing of the either
Infinite or Indefinite Division of the
Particles of Matter, which is necessary
to make them fill exactly all the dif-
feringly figur'd spaces, through which
various

Part. 2.
Artic. 34, 35.

various motions do sometimes make them pass; he confesses (as he well may,) that the point is exceedingly abstruse, and yet concludes: *Et quamvis quomodo fiat indefinita ista Divisio cogitatione comprehendere nequeamus, non ideo tamen debemus dubitare quin fiat, quia clarè percipimus illam necessario sequi ex natura materiae nobis evidentissimè cognita, &c.]*

And in this place it may be seasonable as well as pertinent, to take notice of three or four particulars, which, though they be in some measure imply'd in the former general Consideration, yet deserve to be distinctly inculcated here, both for their importance, and because they may as well be deduc'd as Corollaries from the foregoing Discourse, as be confirmed by the proofs I shall add to each of them. Of these the *first* shall be this, that we must not presently conclude a thing to be contrary to Reason, because Learned Men profess or ev'n complain, that they are not able clearly to *comprehend* it, provided there be competent proof that it is true, and the thing be Primary or Heteroclite.

For it is not *always* necessary to the making the belief of a thing Rational, that

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that we have such a Comprehension of the *thing* believ'd as may be had and justly required in *ordinary Cases* ; since we may be sure of the Truth of a thing, not only by Arguments suggested by the Nature of the thing it self clearly understood by us ; but by the external Testimony of such a Witness, as we know will not deceive us, and cannot (at least in our Case) be reasonably suspected to be himself deceiv'd. And therefore it may in *some Cases* suffice to make our belief Rational, that we clearly discern sufficient Reason to believe that a thing is true, whether that Reason spring from the Evidence and Cogency of the extrinsick Motives we have to believe, or from the Proofs suggested to us by what we know of the Thing believ'd, nay, though there be something in the nature of that Thing, which do's puzzle and pose our Understanding.

That many things that are very hard, and require a great attention, and a good judgment to be made out, may yet be true, will be manifest from what I shall within a Page or two note about divers Geometrical Demonstrations, which require, besides a good stock of knowledge in those matters, an almost

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most invincible Patience to carry so many things along in ones Mind, and go thorow with them. That also there are other things, which, though they be as manifestly Existent, as those newly mention'd can be demonstratively True, are yet of so abstruse a kind, that it is exceeding difficult to frame clear and satisfactory Notions of their Nature, we might learn, if we were inquisitive enough, ev'n from some of the most obvious things; such as, for instance, *Matter* and *Time*: As to the former whereof, (*Matter*,) though the World and our own Bodies be made of it, yet the Ideas that are wont to be framed of it ev'n by the greatest Clerks, are incumber'd with too great difficulties (some of which I elsewhere mention) to be easily acquiesc'd in by considering Men. And as for the latter, (*Time*,) though that justly celebrated saying of *Augustine*, *Si nemo ex me quærat quid sit Tempus, scio; si quærenti explicare velim, nescio*; seem in the first part of it to own a knowledge of what Time is, yet by the latter part, (wherein he confesses he cannot declare what it is,) I am not only allow'd to believe that he could not propose an intelligible Idea
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of it, but invited to think that in the first part of the sentence he only meant, that when he did not attentively consider the *Nature of it*, he thought he understood it, or that he knew *that there is* such a thing as *Time*, though he could not explain *what it is*.

And indeed, though *Time* be that, which all Men allow to be, yet, if *per impossibile* (as the Schools speak) a Man could have no other Notion or Proof of Time and Eternity, (even such Eternity as must be conceded to something,) than what he could collect from the best Descriptions of its Nature and Properties that are wont to be given; I scarce doubt, but he would look upon it as an unintelligible thing, and incumber'd with too many Difficulties to be fit to be admitted into a wise mans Belief. And this perhaps you will grant me, if you have ever put your self to the Penance of perusing those confounding Disputes and Speculations about *Time* and *Eternity*, that partly in *Aristotle* and his Commentators, and partly among the *Schoolmen*, and others, are to be met with upon these abstruse Subjects. And no wonder, since the Learned *Gassendus* and his Followers have

have very plausibly (if not solidly) shewn, that *Duration*, (and *Time* is but *Duration* measur'd) is neither a Substance nor an Accident, which they also hold of *Space*; about which the Altercations among Philosophers and Schoolmen are but little, if at all, inferiour to those about *Time*. And I the rather choose to mention these instances of *Time* and *Space*, because they agree very well with what I intimated by the expression of *Primary* or *Heteroclite* things.

To which may be referr'd some of those things, that are call'd *Spiritual* or *Supernatural*, about which the same Considerations may have place, especially by Reason of this Affinity between them, that when we treat of either, some Proofs may in certain Cases be sufficient, in spite of such Objections, as in other (and more ordinary Cases) would invalidate Arguments seemingly as strong as those Proofs.

If it be here objected, That I am too bold in venturing without the Precedence or Authority of Learned Men, to introduce so great a difference betwixt other things and those which I call *Primary* and *Heteroclite*: I answer,
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That I shall not solicitously enquire, whether any others have had the same thoughts that I propos'd ; since, whether they be new or no, they ought not to be rejected, if they be Rational.

And I have this inducement to suppose, that there ought to be in some cases a great difference between them and other things, and consequently between the judgments we make of the ways of arguing about them, and about other things ; so that they are exceeding difficult to be clearly conceiv'd and explicated by our imperfect Faculties, and by that difficulty apt to make what Men say of them, though true, to be less satisfactory and acquiesced in, than things not more true or rational, suggested upon enquiries about Subjects more familiar, or which are at least more proportionate to our Faculties : For, those abstruse things, of which we have been speaking, being such, as either have no proper and clear *Genus* , by the help of which they may be comprehended, or have not any thing in Nature, that is (sufficiently) like them, by a resemblance to which we may conceive them ; or being perhaps both *Primary* and *Heteroclite* too, as not being deriv'd from

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the common Physical Causes of other things, and having a Nature widely differing from the rest of things; 'tis no wonder, that our limited and imperfect Understandings should not be able to reach to a full and clear Comprehension of them; but should be swallow'd up with the Scruples and Difficulties that may be suggested by a bold and nice enquiry into things, to which there seems to belong, in some respect or other, a kind of Infinity.

Upon these, and other Considerations of kin to them, I count it not irrational, to think that things *Primary* and *Heteroclite*, as also by a parity of Reason, some things Immaterial and Supernatural, may be sufficiently prov'd in their kind, if there be such a positive proof of them as would be competent and satisfactory, in case there were no considerable Objections made against the thing prov'd (especially supposing that the asserted Doctrine be not incumbered with much greater inconveniencies than the contrary Doctrine, or than any other, propos'd concerning that Subject:) Nay, I know not, why we may not, in judging of Primary and of Immaterial things, safely enough prefer
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that Opinion, which has the more Cogent *Positive Proofs*, though it seem liable to somewhat the greater inconveniences ; because in such cases our understanding is gratify'd with what it most requires in all cases, that is competent *Positive Inducements* to assent ; and it is not confounded by the Objections, because a disability to answer them directly and fully may very well proceed either from the too abstruse Nature of the thing, or the limitedness and weakness of our humane Intellects.

And thus we may render a Reason, why , when we discourse of such uncommon Matters , we may sometimes reasonably acquiesce in proofs in spite of such Objections as in ordinary cases would be prevailing ones. For the things, about which these proofs are conversant, being *Primary* or *Heteroclite*, or of as abstruse a Nature as if they were so, it too often happens, that, what Opinion soever we choose about them, we must admit something that is incumbered with great difficulties, and therefore will be liable to great Objections, that perhaps will never be directly and satisfactorily answer'd. And since it may fare thus with us, where two opposi-

site Opinions are contradictory, we may conclude, that those difficulties will not cogently evince the fallity of a Theological Opinion, which are but such, that the same, or as great, may be objected against another, that either is manifestly or confessedly a Truth, or which must necessarily be admitted to be one, if the contrary Theological Tenet be suppos'd not to be one.

2. Another Corollary that may be drawn from the Discourse that afforded us the former, may be this; That it may not be unreasonable to believe a thing, though its *Proof* be very difficult to be understood. To manifest this, I shall need no other Argument, than what may be afforded by divers Geometrical and other Mathematical Demonstrations; some of which are fetch'd by intermediate Conclusions from Principles so very remote, and require so long a *series* of *Mediums* to be employ'd about them, that *not only* a Man that were of *Pilate's* temper, who having ask'd Him that could best tell him, *What is Truth*, would not stay awhile to be satisfi'd about his Inquiry, would before he reaches half way to the End of the Demonstration, or perhaps of the

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Lemma's, be quite discourag'd from proceeding any further ; *but* ev'n sedulous and heedful Perusers do find themselves oftentimes unable to carry along such a chain of Inferences in their minds , as clearly to discern whether the whole Ratiocination be coherent, and all the particulars have their due strength and connection. And if you please to make a Tryal upon some of the Demonstrations of *Vitellio*, or ev'n of *Clavius* , that I can direct you to, I doubt they will put you to the full Exercise of your Patience, and quite tire your Attention: And though the modern Algebrists by their Excellent way of expressing Quantities by Symbols , have so abridg'd Geometrical and Arithmetical Demonstrations, that by the help of *species* 'tis sometimes easie to Demonstrate that in a Line , which in the ordinary way would require a whole Page, (as our most Learned Friend *Dr. Ward* has ingeniously shewn, by giving the Demonstrations of about twenty of *Mr. Hobbs's* Theorems in less than so many Lines;) yet some Demonstrable Truths are so abstruse, that ev'n in the Symbolical way Men need more attention to discern them, than most Men would em-

ploy in any Speculation whatsoever. And *Des-Cartes* himself, as famous and expert a Master as he was in this way, confesses in a Letter to one of his Friends, that the Solution of a Problem in *Pappus* cost him no less than six weeks study; though now, most Mathematical Demonstrations do indeed seem far shorter than they are, because that *Euclid's Elements* being generally receiv'd among Mathematicians, all his Propositions are so many *Lemmata*, which need be but refer'd to in the Margin, being known and demonstrated already. By all which it may appear, that, granting some Theological Truths to be complain'd of by many as things so mysterious and abstruse, that they cannot readily discern the force of those Proofs, that *Des-Cartes*, and other subtle Speculators have propos'd to evince them; yet if o her Learned Men, that are competent Estimators, and are accustomed to bring much Patience and Attention to the discernment of difficult and important Truths, profess themselves satisfi'd with them, the Probations may yet be cogent, notwithstanding the difficulty to have their strength apprehended. For if such a difficulty ought to pass

pass for a mark that a Ratiocination is not valid, no Reasonings will be found fitter to be rejected or distrusted, than many of those whose Cogency has procur'd such a Repute to Mathematical Demonstrations.

3. It may also be deduc'd from the foregoing discourse, That 'tis not *always* against Reason to embrace an Opinion which may be incumbred with a great Difficulty, or liable to an Objection not easie to be solv'd; especially if the Subject be such, that other Opinions about it avoid not either the same Inconveniences, or as great ones. The *first* part of what is said in this Consideration, will often follow from the Supposition made in the precedent Discourse. For those things that render a Doctrine or Assertion difficult to be conceiv'd and explain'd, will easily supply the Adversaries of it with Objections against it.

And as for the *latter*, viz. the Clause which takes notice that the Consideration, to which 'tis annex'd, will chiefly take place in that sort of Opinions that are specifi'd in it; it will need but little of distinct Proof.

For 'tis manifest enough, that if the Subject or Object, about which the Opi-

nion propos'd is conversant, be such, that not only the contradictory Opinion, but others also, are obnoxious either to the same Inconveniencies, or to others that are equal or greater; the difficulties that are urg'd against a Theological Doctrine, may (as hath been shewn already in the first Corollary) be rationally enough attributed, not to the unreasonableness of the Opinion, but to somewhat else.

The last Confectary, that (as I intimated) may be deduc'd from the precedent Discourse, is, That 'tis not always Unreasonable to believe something Theological for a Truth, which (*Ido not say is truly inconsistent with, but*) *we do not clearly discern to comport very well with something else that we also take for a Truth*, or perhaps that is one indeed; if the Theological Tenet be sufficiently prov'd in its kind, and be of that sort of things that we have been of late and are yet discoursing of.

The generality of our Philosophers, as well as Divines, believe, That God has a foreknowledge of all future Contingencies; and yet how a certain Prescience can consist with the Free-will of Man, (which yet is generally granted

ed him, in things meerly Moral or Civil,) is so difficult to discern, that the *Socinians* are wont to deny such things, as depend upon the will of free Agents, to be the proper Objects of Omniscience; and the Head of the Remonstrants, though a very subtle Writer, confesses that he knows not, how clearly to make out the consistency of Gods Prescience and Mans freedom; both which he yet confesses to be Truths, being compell'd to acknowledge the former, (for the latter is evident,) as well by the Infiniteness that must be ascrib'd to Gods Perfections, as by the Prophetick Predictions, whereby such contingent Events have been actually foretold. And the reconciliation of these Truths is not a difficulty peculiar to the Christian Religion, but concerns speculative Men in all Religions, who acknowledge the Deity to be infinitely perfect, and allow Man, as they do, to be a free Agent.

[But I have made this Section so prolix already, that I must not enlarge on this third particular. And therefore I shall shut it up with an acknowledgment of *Des-Cartes*, which may be apply'd not only to it, but to almost all
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that has been discours'd in this Section, and indeed to a great part of this Letter. He then in an Epistle, that came not forth till some years after the Writers death, speaks thus to the Philosophical Adversary to whom 'tis address'd : *As I have often said, when the Question is about things that relate to God, or to what is Infinite, we must not consider what we can comprehend of them, (since we know that they ought not to be comprehended by us) but only what we can conceive of them, or can attain to by any certain Reason or Argument.*

Volume 2.
Letter 16.

S E C T. VII.

And now 'tis time to advance to one of the main Considerations I had to propose to you concerning the Subject of this Letter, and it is this; That when we are to judge, whether a thing be contrary to Reason or not, there is a great deal of difference, whether we take Reason for the Faculty furnish'd only with its own innate Principle, and such Notions as are generally obvious, (nay, and if you please, with this or that

that Philosophical Theory ;) or for the Faculty illuminated by Divine Revelation, especially that which is contain'd in the Books commonly call'd the *Scripture*.

To clear and inforce this the better, I shall invite you to take notice with me of the two following particulars.

We may then in the *first* place consider, That ev'n in things meerly Natural, Men do not think it at all Irrational, to believe divers such things upon extrinsecal Proofs, especially the Testimony of the skilful, as, if it were not for that Testimony, a Man, though born with good parts, and possibly very Learn'd in the Peripatetick or some other particular Philosophy, would look upon as Irrational to be believ'd, and contrary to the Laws of Nature.

Of this I shall give you some Instances in the *Phænomena* of the *Loadstone*, and particularly such as these ; That the Loadstone, though (as was above intimated) with one part it will draw, yet with another the same stone will repel the same point of the same excited Needle ; and yet at the same time be fit to attract either point of another Needle that never came near a Loadstone

stone before : *That* though it be the Loadstone that imparts an attractive virtue to the Iron, yet when the Loadstone is cap'd, as they call'd it, and so a piece of Iron (and consequently a distance) is interpos'd betwixt the stone and the weight to be rais'd, it will take up by many times more than if it be it self apply'd immediately thereunto,

* In his little
Tract de Mag-
netis Proprie-
tatibus. p. m.
350.

insomuch that *Mersennus* relates*, that (if there be no mistake,) he had a Loadstone that of *it self* would take up but half an

Ounce of Iron, which when *arm'd* (or cap'd) would lift up ten Pounds; which (says he) exceeded the former weight three hundred and twenty times : *That* a Mariners Needle, being once touch'd with a vigorous Loadstone, will afterwards, when freely poiz'd, turn it self North and South; and if it be by force made to regard the East and West, or any other points of the Compass, as soon as 'tis left at liberty, 'twill of its self return to its former Position : *That* a Loadstone floating on water, will as well come to, and follow a piece of, Iron that is kept from advancing towards it ; as, when it self

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is fix'd, and the Iron at liberty, 'twill draw that Metal to it: *That* without any sensible alteration in the Agent or the Patient, the Loadstone will in a trice communicate all its virtues to a piece of Steel, and enable that to communicate them to another piece of the same Metal: *That* if a Loadstone, having been markt at one end, be cut long-wise according to its *Axis*, and one Segment be freely suspended over the other, the halves of the markt end, that touch'd one another before, will not now lie together, but the lower will drive away the upper; and that which regarded the North in the markt end of the intire Loadstone, will join with that extreme of the lower half, which in the intire stone regarded the South: *That* (as appears by this last nam'd Property) there are the same Magnetical Qualities in the separated parts of a Magnet, as in the intire stone; and if it be cut, or even rudely broken into a great many parts or fragments, every one of these portions, though perhaps not so big as a Corn of Wheat, will, if I may so speak, set up for its self, and have its own Northern and Southern Poles, and become a little Magnet, *sui juris*, or independent-

dependent upon the stone from which 'twas sever'd, and from all its other parts: That, if a Loadstone be skilfully made Spherical, this little Magnetick Globe, very fitly by our *Gilbert* call'd a *Terrella*, will not only, being freely plac'd, turn North and South, and retain that Position, but have its Poles, its Meridians, its *Æquator*, &c. upon good grounds designable upon it, as they are upon the great Globe of the Earth. And this will hold, whether the *Terrella* be great or small.

I might not only much encrease the number of these odd Magnetical *Phænomena's*, but add others about other Subjects: But these may suffice to suggest to us this Reflection, That there is no doubt to be made, but that a Man, who never had the opportunity to see or hear of Magnetical Experiments, would look upon these as contrary to the Principles of Nature, and therefore to the Dictates of Reason, as (accordingly) some Learned *Aristotelians*, to whom I had occasion to propose some of them, rejected them as Incredible. And I doubt not, but I could frame as plausible Arguments from the meer Axioms of Philosophers, and the Doctrine of Philosophick

Iosophick Schools against some Magnetical *Phænomena*, which Experience hath satisfi'd me of, as are wont to be drawn from the same Topicks against the Mysterious Articles of Faith; since among the strange Properties of the Loadstone there are some, which are not only admirable and stupendious, but seem repugnant to the Dictates of the received Philosophy and the course of Nature. For, whereas Natural Bodies, how subtile soever, require some particular Dispositions in the *Medium* through which their Corpuscles are to be diffus'd, or their Actions transmitted, so that Light it self, whether it be a most subtile Body, or a naked Quality, is resisted by all opacous *Mediums*, and the very *effluvia* of Amber and other Electricks will not permeate the thinnest Glass, or even a sheet of fine Paper; yet the Loadstone readily performing his Operations through all kind of *Mediums*, without excepting Glass it self.

If the Poles of two Magnetick Needles do both of them regard the North, another Philosopher would conclude them to have a *sympathy*, at least to be unlikely to disagree; and yet, if he bring these Extremes of the same Denomina-

mination within the reach of one another, one will presently drive away the other as if there were a powerful *Antipathy* between them.

A somewhat long Needle being plac'd horizontally, and exactly poiz'd upon the point of a Pin, if you gently touch one end with the Pole of a vigorous Magnet, that end shall manifestly dip or stoop, though you often take it off the Pin, and put it on again. And this inclination of the Needle will continue many years, and yet there is not only no other sensible change made in the Metal by the Contact of the Loadstone; but one end has requir'd a durable Preponderancy, though the other be not lighter, nor the whole Needle heavier than before. And the *Inclination* of the Magnetick Needle may be by another touch of the Loadstone taken away without lessning the weight of the part that is depriv'd of it.

The Operation that in a trice the Loadstone has on a Mariners Needle, though it makes no sensible change in it, or weakens the Loadstone itself, will not be lost, though you carry it as far as the Southern Hemisphere; but it will not be the same in all places, but in some the

the Magnetick Needle will point directly at the North, in others 'twill deviate or *decline* some degrees towards the East or the West: And, which seems yet more strange, the same Needle in the same place will not always regard the same point of the Compass, but, lookt on at distant times, may vary from the true Meridian, sometimes to the West, and afterwards to the East.

All the communicable virtues of the Magnet may be imparted to Iron, without any actual Contact of the two Bodies, but barely by approaching in a convenient way the Iron to the Loadstone for a few moments. And the Metal may likewise be depriv'd of those virtues in a trice, without any immediate Contact by the same or another Loadstone.

If you mark one end of a Rod, or other oblong piece of Iron, that never came near a Magnet, and hold it perpendicularly, you may at pleasure, and in the hundreth part of a minute, make it become the North or South Pole of a Magnetical Body. For if, when 'tis held upright, you apply to the bottom of it the North-extreme of an excited and well-poiz'd Needle, the lower end

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of the Iron will drive away that Extreme; which yet will be drawn by the upper end of the same Iron. And if by inverting you make this lower end the uppermost, it will not attract, but repel the same Lilly or North-point of the Needle, just under which it is to be perpendicularly held.

Though, *vis unita fortior*, be a receiv'd Rule among Naturalists; yet oftentimes, if a Magnet be cut into pieces, these will take up and sustain much more Iron than the intire stone was able to do.

If of two good Loadstones the former be much bigger, and on that account stronger than the other, the greater will draw a piece of Iron, and retain it much more strongly than the lesser; and yet, when the Iron sticks fast to the greater and stronger Loadstone, the lesser and weaker may draw the Iron from it, and take it quite away.

These *Phænomena*, (to mention now no more,) are so repugnant to the common sentiments of Naturalists, and the ordinary course of things, that, if antecedently to any Testimony of experience these Magnetical Properties had been propos'd to *Aristotle* himself, he would probably have judg'd them fictitious

tious things, as repugnant to the Laws of Nature: Nevertheless, though it seems incredible, that the bare touch of a Loadstone *should impart* to the Mariners Needle a Property, which, (as far as we know,) nothing in the whole World that is not Magnetical can communicate or possess; and should operate (as Men suppose) upon it at three or four thousand Leagues distance; yet this is believ'd by the Peripateticks themselves upon the Testimony of those Navigators that have sail'd to the *East* and *West-Indies*; and divers even of the more rigid of the modern Philosophers believe more than this, upon the Testimony of *Gilbert*, *Cabaus*, *Kircherus*, and other Learned Magnetical Writers, who have affirmed these things; most of which I can also averr to you upon my own knowledge.

Thus the *Habitableness of the Torrid Zone*, though (as I lately noted) upon probable grounds deny'd by *Aristotle*, and the generality of Philosophers for many Ages; yet not only that, but its Populousness is now confidently believed by the *Peripatetick* Schoolmen themselves, who never were there.

And though *Ptolomy*, and some other

eminent Astronomers, did with great care and skill, and by the help of Geometry, as well as Observations, frame a Theory of the Planets so plausibly contriv'd, that most of the succeeding Mathematicians for 12 or 14 Ages acquiesc'd in it; yet almost all the modern Philosophers and Astronomers, that have search'd into these matters with a readiness to believe their Eyes, and allow their Reason to act freely, have been forc'd, if not to reject the whole Theory, yet at least to alter it quite, as to the Number and Order of the Planets, though these last nam'd Innovations are sometimes *solely*, and always *mainly* built upon the *Phænomena* discover'd to us by two or three pieces of glass plac'd in a long hollow Cane, and honour'd with the name of a *Telescope*.

The last of the two things I invited you to consider with me, is this, That when we are to judge, which of two disagreeing Opinions is most Rational, *i.e.* to be judg'd most agreeable to right Reason, we ought to give sentence, not for that which the Faculty, furnish'd only with such and such Notions, whether vulgar or borrow'd from this or that

that Sect of Philosophers, would prefer, but that which is prefer'd by the Faculty furnish'd either with all the Evidence requisite or advantageous to make it give a right Judgment in the case lying before it; or, when that cannot be had, with the best and fullest Informations that it can procure.

This is so evident by its own light, that your Friend might look upon it as an affront to his Judgment, if I should go about solicitously to prove it. And therefore I shall only advertise you, that, provided the Information be such as a man has just cause to believe, and perceives that he clearly understands, it will not alter the case, *whether* he have it by Reason, as that is taken for the Faculty furnish'd but with its inbred Notions and the more common Observations, *or* by some Philosophical Theory, *or* by Experiments purposely devis'd, *or* by Testimony Humane or Divine, which last we call *Revelation*. For all these are but differing ways of informing the Understanding, and of signifying to it the same thing; as the Sight and the Touch may assure a Man, that a Body is smooth or rough, *or* in motion or at rest; (and in some other instances se-

veral senses discover to us the same Object, which is therefore call'd *Objectum Commune* ;) and provided these Informations have the conditions lately intimated, which way soever the Understanding receives them , it may safely reason and build Opinions upon them.

Astronomers have within these 100 years observ'd, that a Star hath appeared among the Fix'd ones for some time, and having afterwards disappear'd, has yet some years after that, shew'd it self again. And though, as to this surprising *Phænomenon*, our Experimental Philosophers could have contributed nothing to the producing it , and though 'tis quite out of all the received Systems of the Heavens that Astronomers have hitherto deliver'd ; yet the Star it self may be a true Celestial light, and may allow us to Philosophize upon it, and draw Inferences from the Discoveries it makes us ; as well as we can from the *Phænomena* of those Stars that are not extraordinary , and of those Falling Stars that are within our own Ken and Region.

That the Supernatural things, said to be perform'd by *Witches* and *Evil Spirits*, might, if true, supply us with *Hypotheses*

ses and *Mediums* whereby to constitute and prove Theories, as well as the *Phænomena* of meer nature, seems tacitely indeed, but yet sufficiently, to be acknowledged, by those modern Naturalists, that care not to take any other way to decline the Consequences that may be drawn from such Relations, than solicitously to shew, that the Relations themselves are all (as I fear most of them are) false, and occasion'd by the Credulity or Imposture of Men.

But not to do any more than glance at these matters, let us proceed upon what is more unquestionable, and consider, that, since ev'n our most Critical Philosophers do admit many of the astonishing Attributes of Magnetick Bodies, which themselves never had occasion to see, upon the Testimony of *Gilbert*, and others, who never were able to give the true causes of them; because they look upon those Relators as honest Men, and judicious enough not to be impos'd upon as to the matter of Fact: Since (I say) such amazing things are believ'd by such severe Naturalists, upon the Authority of Men who did not know the intimate nature of Magnetick Bodies; and since these strange *Phæno-*

nomena are not only assented to as true by the Philosophers we speak of, but many Philosophical consequences are without hæsitancy deduc'd from them, without any blemish to the judgment of those that give their Assent both to the Things and the Inferences; why should it be contrary to Reason to believe the Testimony of God either about his Nature, which He can *best*, and He alone can *fully* know, or about the things which either he himself has done, as the Creation of the World and of Man; or which he means to do, as the destroying the World, (whether the whole World, or our great *Vortex* only, I dispute not,) and the raising both of good and bad Men to life again, to receive Rewards and Punishments, according to their Demerits. For methinks that Apostle argues very well, who says, *If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater*; especially about such things concerning his own Nature, Will, and Purposes, as 'tis evident that Reason, by its own unassisted light, cannot give us the knowledge of.

So that we Christians in assenting to Doctrines upon the account of Revelation,

tion, need not, nor do not, reject the Authority of Reason, but only appeal from Reason to it self, *i. e.* from Reason, as it is more *slightly*, to its Dictates, as 'tis more *fully* inform'd. Of which two sorts of Dictates there is nothing more rational, than to prefer the latter to the former.

And for my part I am apt to think, that, if what has been represented in this *section* were duly consider'd, this alone would very much contribute to prevent or answer most of the Objections, that make such of the Questioners of Religion, as are not resolutely vitious, entertain such hard thoughts of some Articles of the Christian Faith, as if they were directly repugnant to Reason. For, (as we were observing) *that* is not to be look'd on as the judgment of Reason, that is pronounc'd ev'n by a rational Man according to a Set of Notions, though the Inferences from these would be rational, in case there were nothing else fit to be taken into consideration by him that judges; but *that* is rather to be look'd upon as the judgment of Reason, which takes in the most Information procurable, that is pertinent to the things under consideration.

deration: And therefore Men, though otherwise learn'd and witty, shew themselves not equal Estimators of the case of those that believe the Articles we speak of, when they pronounce them to assent Irrationally, because the things they assent to cannot be demonstrated or maintain'd by meer natural Reason, and would probably be rejected by *Democritus*, *Epicurus*, *Aristotle*, or any other of the ancient Philosophers, to whom they should be nakedly propos'd, and whose judgment should be desir'd about them. For, although this Allegation would signifie much, if we pretended to prove what we believe only by Arguments drawn from the nature of the thing assented to; yet it will not signifie much in our case, wherein we pretend to prove what we believe, *chiefly* by Divine Testimony, and therefore ought not to be concluded guilty of an Irrational Assent, unless it can be shewn, either that Divine Testimony is not duly challeng'd by us for the main of our Religion; or that in the particular Articles we father something on that Testimony which is not contain'd in it, or rightly deducible from it. And to put us upon the proving our particular Articles

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cles of Faith, sufficiently deliver'd in the Scriptures, and not knowable without Revelation, by Arguments meerly natural, without taking notice of those we can bring for the proof of that Revelation on whose account we embrace those Articles, is to challenge a Man to a Duel, upon condition he shall make no use of his best weapons; and is as unreasonable, as if a Schoolman should challenge your Friend to prove, that the *Torrid Zone* is inhabited, against the Reasons that the *Aristotelians* are wont to give to prove it uninhabitable, without allowing him to make use of the testimony of Navigators, who assure us of the constant *Brisés* that daily ventilate the Air, and qualifie that heat which otherwise would not be supported, and who furnish us with those other circumstances whereon to build our proofs, which we, that were never there, can have but by Relation.

And indeed, the limitations, that Christian Religion *puts* to some of the dictates of Philosophy, which were wont to be admitted in a more general and unrestrained Sense, and the Doctrines about God and the Soul, &c. that it *superadds* to those which the light of Nature

Nature might lead Men to about the same Subjects ; though to some they may seem injurious to Philosophy and Reason, are as little unkind to either, as is the Gardener to a Crab-stock, or some such other wild Plant, when by cutting off some of the Branches, and by making a slit in the Bark, that he may graft on it a Pare-main, or some other choice Apples , by this seemingly hard usage he brings it to bear much nobler fruit, than, if left to its own natural condition , it ever would have done.

I know not, whether to all that hath been said in this *Section*. I may not add thus much further, that it sometimes happens, that those very things, which at first were propos'd to the understanding, and believ'd upon the score of Revelation, are afterward assented to by it upon the account of meer Reason. To which purpose I consider, that not any of the ancient Philosophers , nay (as far as I have read) ev'n of those that believ'd God to be the Author of the World, dream'd, that He created Matter of nothing , but only form'd the World out of præexistent Matter, whereas Christian Divines usually

ally teach as an Article of Faith, That, besides what they call a mediate Creation, as when Fishes were made out of the water, or *Adam's* body was made out of the earth, there was an immediate Production of Matter it self out of nothing.

SECT. VIII.

After what has been hitherto discours'd, it may be seasonable to consider, what kind of Probation, or what degree of Evidence may reasonably be thought sufficient to make the Christian Religion thought fit to be embrac'd.

Perhaps I shall not need to tell you, that, besides the Demonstrations wont to be treated of in vulgar Logick, there are among Philosophers three distinct, whether *kinds* or *degrees*, of Demonstration. For there is a *Metaphysical* Demonstration, as we may call that, where the Conclusion is manifestly built on those general Metaphysical Axioms that can never be other than true; such as *Nihil potest simul esse & non esse*; *Non Entis nullæ sunt Proprietates Reales*, &c. There are also *Physical* Demon-

Demonstrations, where the Conclusion is evidently deduc'd from Physical Principles; such as are, *Ex nihilo nihil fit. Nulla substantia in nihilum redigitur, &c.* which are not so absolutely certain as the former, because, if there be a God, He may (at least for ought we know) be able to create and annihilate Substances; and yet are held unquestionable by the ancient Naturalists, who still suppose them in their Theories. And lastly, there are *Moral* Demonstrations, such as those where the Conclusion is built either upon some one *such* proof cogent in its kind; or some concurrence of Probabilities that it cannot be but allowed, supposing the truth of the most receiv'd Rules of Prudence and Principles of Practical Philosophy.

And this *third* kind of Probation, though it come behind the two others in certainty, yet it is the surest guide, which the *Actions of Men*, though not their *Contemplations*, have regularly allow'd them to follow. And the Conclusions of a *Moral* Demonstration are the surest that Men aspire to, not only in the conduct of private Mens affairs, but in the Government of States, and
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ev'n of the greatest Monarchies and Empires. And this is considerable in *Moral* Demonstrations, that such may consist, and be as it were made up of particulars, that are each of them but probable; of which the Laws establish by God himself among his own People, as well as the practice of our Courts of Justice here in *England*, afford us a manifest instance in the case of Murder, and some other Criminal Causes. For, though the Testimony of a *single* Witness shall not suffice to prove the accus'd party guilty of Murder; yet the Testimony of *two* Witnesses, though but of equal Credit, that is, a second Testimony added to the first, though of it self never a whit more credible than the former, shall ordinarily suffice to prove a Man guilty; because it is thought reasonable to suppose, that, though each Testimony *single* be but probable, yet a concurrence of such Probabilities (which ought in Reason to be attributed to the Truth of what they jointly tend to prove) may well amount to a Moral certainty, *i. e.* such a certainty as may warrant the Judge to proceed to the sentence of death against the Indicted party.

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To apply these things now to the *Christian Religion*: If you consider, with how much approbation from discerning Men that judicious Observation of *Aristotle* has been entertain'd, where he says, that 'tis as unskilful and improper a thing to require *Mathematical* Demonstrations in *Moral* Affairs, as to take up with *Moral* Arguments in matters *Mathematical*; you will not deny, but that those Articles of the *Christian Religion* that can be prov'd by a *Moral*, though not by a *Metaphysical* or *Physical*, Demonstration, may without any blemish to a Man's Reason be assented to; and that consequently (by vertue of the foregoing Considerations) those other Articles of the *Christian Faith*, that are clearly and legitimately deducible from the so demonstrated Truths, may likewise without disparagement be assented to.

We may also here consider further, That the choosing or refusing to embrace the *Christian Religion*, which is not propos'd to us only as a *System* of *Speculative Doctrines*, but also as a *Body of Laws*, according to which it teaches us, that *God* commands us to worship Him, and regulate our Lives; the

the embracing, *I say*, or not embracing this Religion, is an act of humane choice, and therefore ought to be determin'd according to the dictates of Prudence. Now, though in matters that very much import us, we may wish for and endeavor after such Reasons, whereby to determine our Resolves, as may amount to Moral Demonstrations; yet Prudence will not always require, that we should refuse to act upon Arguments of a less Cogency than Moral Demonstrations. For oftentimes in humane Affairs it so falls out, that divers hazards or other inconveniences will attend whatever resolution we take; and in that case, all that Prudence requires, or can enable us to do, is, to take that resolution which upon the whole matter seems to be preferable to any other; though that which is thus prefer'd, may perhaps be liable to some Objection that cannot be directly answer'd, but only obliquely, by the preponderancy of the Arguments that persuade the choice against which the Objection is made.

But here perhaps you will tell me, that the safest way in a case of such importance, is to suspend an action that is

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every way attended with difficulties, and to forbear either embracing or rejecting the Christian Religion, till the truth or falseness of it come to appear evident and unquestionable.

To which I answer, that indeed in matters of bare Speculation, about which our *Understandings* only need to be conversant, the suspension of Assent is not only practicable, but usually the safest way; but *Des. Cartes* himself, who has been the greatest Example and Inculcator of this Suspension, declares, that he would have it practis'd onely about humane *speculations*, not about humane *Actions*; *Sed hæc interim dubitatio ad solam contemplationem veritatis restringenda; non quantum ad usum vitæ: quia persæpe rerum agendarum occasio præteriret, antequam nos dubiis nostris exolvere possemus. Non raro quod tantum est verisimile cogimur amplecti, vel etiam interdum, etsi e duobus unum altero verisimilius non appareat, alterutrum tamen eligere.* And in some of his other writings he speaks so much to shew, that 'tis unreasonable to expect in matters, where embracing or rejecting a course that requires practice is necessary, such a certainty as he judges necessary to make
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a true Philosopher acquiesce in reference to Propositions about speculative matters, that I find by one of his Letters, that he was vehemently accus'd for having taught, that Men need not have as sure grounds for choosing virtuous and avoiding vicious courses, as for determining about things meerly Notional.

And here let me observe to you the difference, that I take notice of in the cases where we are put upon deliberating, whether we will choose or refuse a thing propos'd. For it may be propounded to us, either as a proffer on whose acceptance an advantage may be hop'd, or as a duty, which, besides the advantage it promises to the performance, has a Penalty annex'd to the non-performance, or as an onely expedient to avoid a great mischief, or obtain a great good.

Thus when in the *Theatrum Chymicum* some of its chief Authors, as *Lully*, *Geber*, *Artephius*, who pretend to have been *Adepti*, i. e. Possessors of the Elixir, very earnestly exhort their Readers to apply themselves to so noble and useful a study as *Alchymy* (by the help of which, the last nam'd *Artephius*

is said to have liv'd a 1000 years,) they make but a Proposition of the first sort. For though a prosperous attempt to make the *Philosophers stone* (supposing there be such a thing) would possess a Man of an inestimable Treasure; yet, if he either refuse to believe these Writers, or, if he do believe them, refuses to take the pains requir'd of him that would follow their counsel, he can only miss of the wealth, &c. they would make him hope for, but is really never a whit the poorer, or in a worse condition than if they had not endeavour'd to engage him.

But if an absolute Sovereign commands something to be done by his Subjects; and to enforce his Command, does not only propose great Rewards to those that shall perform what is prescrib'd, but threatens heavy penalties to the disobedient; this will belong to the second sort of Cases above mention'd, in which, as 'tis evident, a Man has not the same latitude allow'd him as in the first.

But if we suppose, that a Man by a translation of very peccant Matter has got a spreading Gangrene in his Arm, and a skilful Chirurgeon tell him, that,
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if he will part with his Arm, he may be recover'd, and save his life, which else he will certainly lose: This Case will belong to the last sort above mention'd; the Patients parting with his Arm being the onely remedy of the Gangrene, and expedient to save his life, and recover his health. And here also 'tis manifest, that there are far stronger Motives, than those mention'd in the first Case, to make a positive and timely Resolution.

To bring this home to our Subject, I need but mind you, that the Christian Doctrine does not only promise a Heaven to sincere Believers, but threatens no less than a Hell to the Refractory.

The voice of *Moses* to the *Jews* is this, *Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; a blessing, if ye obey the Commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day; and a curse, if ye will not obey the Commandment of the Lord your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day.*

Deutr. 11. 26,
27, 28.

And the Commission that Christ gave his Apottles to preach the Gospel, runs thus: *Go ye into all the world, and preach*

*the Gospel to every creature, i. e. to all
Mankind ; he that believeth,
Mark 16. and is baptiz'd, shall be sav'd ;
15, 16. but he that believeth not, shall
be damn'd.*

By this you may perceive, that as far as there is either truth or probability in the Christian Religion, so far forth he that refuses to become a Disciple to it, runs a venture, not only to lose the greatest blessings that Men can hope, but to fall eternally into the greatest miseries that they can fear. And indeed our Case in reference to the Christian Religion may not only be refer'd to the second sort of Cases lately mention'd, but to the third sort too. For as the language of the Author of the Christian Religion was to his Auditors, *If ye believe not that I am He (the*
John 8. 24. *Messias) ye shall dye in your sins ;* so of the two greatest Heralds of it, the one tells the Jews that neither is there salvation in any other : For, *there*
Acts 4. 12. *is no other Name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved :* And the other tells the Thessalonians, That the Lord Jesus shall be reveal'd from heaven with his mighty Angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance

on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punish'd with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.

*2 Theff. 1.
7, 8, 9.*

By all this it appears, that the Christian Religion is not propos'd barely as a proffer of Heaven in case Men embrace it, but as a Law that Men should embrace it upon the greatest penalty, and as the onely expedient and remedy to attain eternal happiness, and escape endless misery; so that the forbearing to submit our necks to the yoke of Christ, being as well a ruinous course, as to reject it, that which Reason here puts us upon, is, not so much to consider, whether or no the Arguments for the Christian Religion be Demonstrations, and will enable a Man to answer directly all Objections and Scruples; (for there are divers courses that Prudence may enjoin a Man to steer, whilst Philosophy suggests speculative doubts about the grounds of such Resolutions;) but whether it be more likely to be true, than not to be true, or rather, whether it be not more adviseable to perform the conditions it requires upon a probable

bable expectation of obtaining the blessings it promises, than by refusing it to run a probable hazard of incurring such great and endless miseries as it peremptorily threatens.

It will perhaps be said, that this is a hard Case But that is an Allegation I am not here to consider; since it properly belongs to the Doctrine about the Providence of God, who being the only Author and absolute Lord of the Creatures, who can receive neither Laws nor Benefits from them, that can oblige him to them; has a right to prescribe them what Laws he thinks fit, that are not impossible for them to obey, and to punish their disobedience to such Laws; and much more has a right to annex what conditions he pleases to that inestimable Felicity he holds forth; the proffer of it upon any terms being a free act of his meer goodness, and the value of it incomparably surpassing whatever we Men can do or suffer to obtain it; especially considering, that, as he might enforce his Commands, as Sovereigns commonly do by threatening Penalties to the disobedient, without proposing Rewards to the performers; so he has given Men such probable Arguments to
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ground their expectations on, that they will be self-condemn'd, if they reject the Religion he proposes, and yet maintain it to be decent (if I may so speak) for him to crown their Faith with unvaluable blessings. But, as I was saying, the direct and full Answer to this Allegation belongs not to this place, where it may suffice to say, that whether the Case be hard or no, yet this is the Case. And therefore though the proofs of the Christian Religion did not amount (which yet I do not grant) to Moral Demonstrations, a Man may act rationally in embracing that Religion, if, all things consider'd, it appear more likely to be true, than not to be true.

And I shall by and by shew you, that this is not the onely Case, where Prudence puts us upon making resolutions notwithstanding contrary doubts.

I know the harshness of the Case is by most Men made to consist in this, That for a Religion, whereof the truth suppos'd in its promises and threats is not demonstratively prov'd, we must resign up our pleasures, and sometimes undergo considerable hardships and losses, and consequently we must quit what is certain, for what is uncertain. I have

in another Paper had occasion to say something else to this Objection, than what (to avoid repetition) shall make up my present Answer, which consists of two parts.

The *first* whereof is, That what we are to give up to become Christians, is not really so valuable in itself as the Objecters think, and that 'tis of scarce any value at all, if compar'd to the goods we may acquire by parting with them. For alas! what is it that Christianity requires us to forego, but small petty enjoyments? which those, that have had the most of, have found them, and pronounced them unsatisfactory whilst they possess them, and which manifest experience shews to be no less transitory, than they have been declar'd empty, since a thousand Accidents may take them from us, and Death will infallibly after a short time (which can be but a moment compar'd to Eternity) take us from them. And if it be said, that these Enjoyments, such as they are, are at least the only happiness that we can make our selves sure of, I must freely profess, that I think it therefore the more reasonable to part with them, if it be necessary upon the hopes that Christian

stian Religion gives us. For (especially if a Man behold those things not only with a Philosophical eye that can look *through* them, but with a Christian eye that can look *beyond* them,) if there be no greater happiness, I do not think so poor a thing as Men call Happiness worth being greedily desir'd; and if there be such a transcendent happiness as Christianity holds forth, I am sure, that deserves to be the object of my Ambition. So that either the Meanness of worldly happiness will make me think it no great misery to want it, or the Excellency of heavenly Felicity will make me think it great wisdom to part with earthly for it.

And now, in the *second* part of my Answer, I must invite you to consider with me, that Christian Religion requires not of us actions more imprudent, than divers others, that are generally look'd upon as complying with the dictates of Prudence, and some of them practis'd by great Politicians themselves in the weighty affairs of State.

You know what a common practice it is in great storms at Sea, for the Merchants themselves to throw over-board their Goods, and perhaps too their Vi-
ctuals,

quals (as in *Paul's* case) though they be sure to lose what they cast away, and are not certain either that this loss will save the ship, or that the ship may not be sav'd without it. The wisest, and ev'n the worldliest Men, whether Princes or private persons, think themselves never more so, than when they toyl and lay out their care and time, and usually deny themselves many things to provide advantagiously for Children which they have but a Womans word for, and consequently a bare Moral probability to assure them to be theirs.

In the *Small Pox* many Physitians are for Bleeding, and others (as most of our English Practitioners) are very much against it. Supposing then (which is no very rare Case) that a person invaded by that disease, be told by one of his Physitians, that unless Nature be eas'd of part of her burden by Phlebotomy, she will never be able to overcome the disease; and on the contrary, the other assures him, that, if by exhausting the treasure of life (the Blood) he further weakens Nature which is but too weak already, the disease must needs overcome her: What can a prudent Man do in this Case, where he
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can take no resolution, against which probable Arguments, that are not directly and fully to be answer'd, may not be oppos'd, and where yet the suspension of his resolution may be as ruinous, as the venturing to take either of those he is invited to?

And in the formerly mentioned Case, of a Man that has a spreading Gangrene in his Arm, if he consents that it be cut off, which Prudence often requires that he should do, he is certain to lose one of his usefulest limbs, and is not certain but that he may save his life without that loss, nor that he shall save it by that loss.

And to give you an Instance or two of a more publick nature: How many Examples does History afford us of famous Generals, and other great Commanders, who have ventur'd their Forces and their Lives to seize upon places promis'd to be betray'd to them by those they had corrupted with money; though the ground, upon which they run this hazard, be the engagement of some, who, if they were not Traytors that could falsifie their faith, would never have been brib'd to make so criminal and ignominious an engagement?

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How often have the greatest Politicians either resolv'd to enter into a War, or taken courses that they foresee will end in a War, upon the informations they receive from those they have corrupted in other Princes Councils; though, to believe such Intelligencers, those who venture so much upon their informations, must suppose them faithless and perfidious Men?

It were not difficult, to add other Instances to the same purpose, by which join'd with what has been above discours'd, it may appear, that a Man need not renounce or lay aside his Reason to resolve to fulfill the conditions of the Gospel, though the Arguments for it were none of them demonstrative ones. For so much as a Probability of attaining by it such inestimable blessings, as it proposes, and little more than a bare Probability of incurring, by rejecting it, such unspeakable miseries as it threatens, may rationally induce a Man to resolve upon fulfilling its reasonable conditions, and his Prudence may very well be justifi'd if it do but appear, that
(1) It is more probable that some Religion should be true, than that so many well attested Miracles alledg'd by the
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ancient Christians should be false ; and that God who is the Author of the World, and of Men, (for so much, I think, may be Physically prov'd) should leave Man whom he has so fitted, and by benefits and internal Laws obliged to worship him, without any express direction how to do it : And that (2) If there be any true Religion, the Christian is the most likely to be that, in regard not only of the excellency of its Doctrine and Promises, but of the Prophecies and Miracles that bare witness to it, the Records of which were made by honest plain Men, who taught and practised the strictest virtue, and who knew their Religion condemn'd Lying, freely join'd their Doctrine and Narratives with their blood : the truth of which was so manifest in the times when they were said to be done, that the evidence seem'd abundantly sufficient to convert whole Nations, and among them many considerable and prudent persons, who had great opportunity as well as concern to examine the truth of them, and who were by their interest and education so indispos'd to embrace Christianity, that, to make a sincere profession of it, they must necessarily relinquish both
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their former Religion, and their former Vices, and venturously expose for it not only their Fortunes, but their Lives.

If it be here objected, that it is very harsh, if not unreasonable, to exact upon so great penalty as Damnation so firm an assent, as is requisite to Faith, to such Doctrines as are either obscurely delivered, or have not their truth demonstratively made out : I answer, that whatever others may think, I don't believe, that there is any degree of Faith absolutely necessary to salvation, that is not sutable to the evidence that Men may have of it, if they be not wanting to themselves through Laziness, Prejudices, Vice, Passion, Interest, or some other culpable defect. For considering that God is just, and gracious, and has been pleas'd to promulgate the Gospel, that Men whom it supposes to act as such (that is, as rational Creatures) should be brought to salvation by it ; I see no just cause to think, that he intends to make any thing absolutely necessary to salvation, that they may not so far clearly understand as they are commanded distinctly and explicitly to believe it ; and what is not so deliver'd, I should, for that very Reason, unwillingly admit
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to be necessary to salvation: And you may here remember, that I formerly told you, I was far from thinking all the Tenents either of the Schools, or of particular Churches, to be so much as Christian Verities, and therefore am very unlike to allow them here to be fundamental and necessary ones; and I take it to be almost as great as common a mistake, that all the Doctrines that *concern* fundamental Articles, must be fundamental too; as if because the Head is a noble part of the Body, and essential to life, therefore all the hair that grows upon it, must be thought such too. But then as to the absolute firmness of Assent, that is supposed to be exacted by Christianity to the Articles it delivers, I am not sure that 'tis so necessary in all cases to true and saving Faith, as very many take it to be. For first the Scripture itself tells us, that some of the Truths it reveals, are unfathomable Mysteries, and some other Points are *διονόητα*, hard to be understood; and 'tis unreasonable to suppose, that the highest firmness of Assent is to be given to such Articles, or to those parts of them, as their obscurity keeps us from having so much reason to

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think that we clearly understand them, as we have to suppose we understand those that are far more plainly reveal'd. And (secondly) to speak more generally, 'tis harsh to say, that the same degree of Faith is necessary to all Persons, since Mens natural capacities and dispositions, and their education, and the opportunities they have had of being informed, do very much, yet perhaps not culpably, dispose some more than others to be diffident, and apt to hesitate, and frame doubts. And the same Arguments may appear evident enough to one Man to make it his duty to believe firmly what they persuade, which in another, naturally more sceptical, or better acquainted with the difficulties and objections urged by the opposite Party, may leave some doubts and scruples excusable enough. And when either the Doctrine itself is not clearly deliver'd, or the Proofs of it, that a Man could yet meet with, are not fully cogent; for that Man, not to give such Truths the same degree of Assent that Demonstration may produce, is not, as many interpret it, an affront to the Veracity of God, since he may be heartily disposed and ready to believe

believe all that shall appear to him to be revealed by God, and only doubts, whether the thing proposed be indeed revealed by him, or whether the dissenting Party rightly understands the sense of these words wherein the Revelation is contain'd; which is not to distrust God, but himself: And that in some cases, a degree of Faith not exempt from doubts, may, through Gods goodness, be accepted, we may learn from hence, that the Apostles themselves, who were so much in Christs favour, made it their Prayer to him, *That he would encrease their Faith*: And he that beg'd, that if he could do any thing for his son, and cryed out, *Lord I believe, help thou my unbelief*, was so far accepted by that merciful High Priest, who is apt to be toucht with the sense of our infirmities, that his Request was granted, though it could not be so but by having a Miracle done in his favor. The Disciples distressed by a storm, and crying to their Master, as thinking themselves upon the very point of perishing, were saved by him at the same time when he gave them the Epithet of *men of little faith*: And at another time, *Peter* walking upon the Sea, though he had lost a

degree of that Faith that made him first engage upon that adventure, and was reprov'd for it by Christ, was yet rescu'd from that sinking condition which both he and his Faith were in. And we are told, in the Gospel, of a Faith, which, though no bigger than a grain of Mustard-seed, may enable a Man to remove Mountains: And though this passage speaks not primarily of justifying Faith, yet still it may serve to shew, that degrees of Assent, far short of the greatest, may be so far accepted by God, as to be owned by miraculous Exertions of his Power. For the *Faith* then that is made a necessary condition under the Gospel, as the genuine fruit and scope of it is *Obedience*; so 'tis not indispensably such a Faith as excludes doubts, but refusals. And though the Assent be not so strong as may be produced by a Demonstration; yet it may be graciously accepted, if it be but strong enough to produce Obedience; and accordingly whereas *Paul* in one place declares, *that in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith operative through love*; we may learn his meaning from a parallel place, where varying the words, and
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not the sense, of the latter part of the sentence, he says, *that in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision but the keeping of the Commandments of God.* I readily grant, that attainment of a higher degree of Faith is always a blessing, and cannot be sufficiently prized, without being sincerely aimed at; but there are in some Virtues and Graces degrees, which though to reach be a great happiness, yet 'tis but the endeavoring after them that is an indispensable Duty. Likewise 'tis true, that the firmness of assent to Divine Verities, does in some regard, bring much honour to God; as 'tis said of the Father of the Faithful, (who in reference to the promise made him of *Isaac*, did not consider his own age, nor *Sarah's* long barrenness, so as to entertain any diffidence of what God had told him,) that being mighty in faith, he gave glory to God: But 'tis true too, that in another respect a practical assent built upon a less undoubted evidence, may have its prebeminence; -for when Christ now risen from the dead, had said to the distrustful *Didimus*, *Thomas*, *Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed;* he

immediately adds, *But blessed* (that is, peculiarly and preferably blessed) *are those that have not seen, and yet have believed*; and indeed he does not a little honour God, (in that sense wherein Mortals may be said to honour him) who is so willing to obey and serve him, and so ambitious to be in an estate where he may always do so, that upon what he yet discerns to be but a probability of the Christian Religions being the most acceptable to God, he embraces it with all its difficulties and dangers, and upon this score venturously resolves to submit, if need be, to a present and actual dereliction of all his Sins and Lusts, and perhaps his Interest and his Life too, upon a comparatively uncertain expectation of living with him hereafter.

The Conclusion of the First Part.

And here I will put a Period' to my Answer to your Friends Question in one of the two senses of it, and so to the first Part of this Discourse. Against all which perhaps your Friend will object, That at this rate of arguing for the Christian Religion, one may Apologize for any Opinion, and reconcile the most unreasonable ones to right Reason. But 'tis not difficult for me to reply, That this Objection is grounded either upon a mistake of the design of this Letter, or upon the overlooking of what is suppos'd in it. For I do not pretend, that the Considerations hitherto alledg'd should pass for Demonstrations of the Truth of Christianity, which is to be prov'd *by* the excellency of the Doctrines it reaches, and that of the Rewards it promises, (both which are worthy of God,) and *by* divers other Arguments, especially the *Divine Miracles* that attest it: But that which I was here to do, was, not to lay down the grounds why I receiv'd the Christian Religion, but to return an Answer, backt with Reasons, to the Question

that was propos'd: *Whether I did not think, that a Christian, to continue such, must deny or lay aside his Reason?* The sum of the Answer is this, That the Doctrines really propos'd by the Christian Religion, seeming to me to be by proper Arguments sufficiently prov'd in their kind, so as that the *proofs* of it, whether they be *demonstrative* or no, are *sufficient*, (the nature of the things to be prov'd, consider'd) to justify a rational and prudent Man's embracing it; this Religion (I say) seeming to me to have such positive Proofs for it, I do not think, that the Objections, that are said to be drawn from Reason against it, do really prove the belief of it to be inconsistent with right Reason, and do outweigh the Arguments alledgable in that Religions behalf. To propose some of the general grounds of this Answer of mine, was the design of the Considerations hitherto discours'd of; which (as I hinted to you at the beginning) could be no other than general, unless you had mention'd to me some of your Friends particular Objections, which when he tells you, you will perhaps find that I have already given you the grounds of answering them. And
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though to propose Arguments to evince positively the Truth of our Religion after the example of the excellent *Grotius*, and some other very learned Writers, be not, as you see, either my task or my design; yet if you attentively consider what I write in that short Discourse, wherein I manage but that seemingly popular Argument for Christianity, that is drawn from the Miracles that are said to attest it, you will perchance be invited to think, that when all the other Proofs of it are taken in, a Man may, without renouncing or affronting his Reason, be a Christian.

But to proceed to the more considerable part of what I presum'd your Friend will object, I answer, That the considerations I have alledg'd in the behalf of some Mysteries of the Christian Religion, will not be equally applicable to the most absurd or unreasonable Opinions. For these Considerations are offer'd as Apologies for Christian Doctrines, but upon two or all of these three Suppositions. The first, That the Truth of the main Religion of which such Doctrines make a part, is so far positively prov'd by real and uncontroll'd Miracles, and other compe-

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tent Arguments, that nothing, but the
 manifest and irreconcilable Repugnancy
 of its Doctrines to right Reason,
 ought to hinder us from believing them.
 The second, That divers of the things,
 at which reasonable Men are wont to
 take exception, are such, as Reason it
 self may discern to be very difficult, or
 perhaps impossible for us to understand
 perfectly by our own natural light. And
 the third, That some things in Christianity
 which many Men think contrary
 to Reason, are, at most, but contrary to
 it, as 'tis *incompetently* inform'd and as-
 sisted, but not when 'tis more fully in-
 structed, and particularly when 'tis in-
 lightned and assisted by Divine Revela-
 tion. And as I think these three Sup-
 positions are not justly applicable, (I
 say not, as the Objection does, to the
 most absurd, or unreasonable Opinions,
 but,) to any other Religion than the
 true, which is the Christian; so the last
 of these Suppositions prompts me to
 take notice to you, that, though we
 ought to be exceeding wary, how we
 admit what pretends to be supernatu-
 rally reveal'd; yet if it be attended
 with sufficient evidence of its being so,
 we do very much wrong and prejudice
 our

our selves, if out of an unreasonable jealousy, or, to acquire or maintain the repute of being wiser than others, we shut our eyes against the light it offers. For besides that a Man may as well err by rejecting or ignoring the Truth, as by mistaking a falsehood for it; I consider, that those Men that have an Instrument of knowledge, which other Men either have not, or, (which is as bad) refuse to employ, have a very great advantage above others towards the acquiring of Truth, and with far less parts than they, may discover divers things, which the others, with all their Pride and Industry, shall never attain to. As when *Galilæo* alone among the modern Astronomers was Master of a *Telescope*, 'twas easie for him to make noble discoveries in Heaven of things, to which not only *Ptolomy*, *Alphonsus*, and *Ticho*, but ev'n his Masters, *Aristarchus Samius*, and *Copernicus*, themselves never dream'd of, and which other Astronomers cannot see but by making use of the same kind of Instrument. And on this occasion let me carry the Comparison, suggested by the *Telescope*, a little further, and take notice, that if Men having heard, that there were four Planets

nets moving about *Jupiter*, and that *Venus* is an opacous body, and sometimes horn'd like the Moon, had resolv'd to examine these things by their naked eyes, as by the proper Organs of Sight, without employing the *Telescope*, by which they might suspect, that *Galileo* might put some Optical delusion upon them; they would perhaps have assembled in great multitudes to gaze at *Venus* and *Jupiter*, that (since *plus vident Oculi quam Oculus*) the number of eyes might make amends for their dimness. This attempt not succeeding, they would perhaps choose out some of the youngest and sharpest sighted Men, that by their piercing eyes that may be discover'd which ordinary ones could not reach. And this Expedient not succeeding neither, they would perhaps diet their Stargazers, and prescribe them the inward use of Fennel, and Eye-bright, and externally apply *Collyriums* and Eye-waters, and those to as little purpose as the rest. With such a pity, mix'd with Indignation, as *Galileo* would probably have look'd on such vain and fruitless attempts with, may a judicious Christian, that upon a due examination admits the Truth of the Scriptures,

ptures, look upon the presumptuous and vain endeavors of those Men, who, by the goodness of their natural parts, or by the improvements of them, or by the number of those that conspire in the same search, think, with the bare eye of Reason to make as great discoveries of heavenly Truths, as a person assisted by the Revelations, contain'd in the Scripture, can with great ease and satisfactoriness attain. To which let me add this further improvement of the Comparison, that *as* a skilful Astronomer will indeed first severely examine, whether the *Telescope* be an Instrument fit to be trusted, and not likely to impose upon him; but being once resolv'd of that, will confidently believe the discoveries it makes him, however contrary to the receiv'd Theories of the Celestial Bodies, and to what he himself believ'd before, and would still, if the *Telescope* did not otherwise inform him, continue to believe; *so* a well qualifi'd Inquirer into Religions, though he will be very wary, upon what terms he admits Scripture; yet if he once be fully satisfi'd, that he ought to admit it, he will not scruple to receive upon its authority whatever supernatural Truths it clearly discloses to him;

him ; though perhaps contrary to the Opinions he formerly held, and which, if the Scripture did not teach him otherwise, he would yet assent to. And *as* the *Galaxy* and other whitish parts of the Sky, were by *Aristotle* and his Followers, and many other Philosophers, who look'd on them only with their naked eyes, for many Ages reputed to be but Meteors ; but to those that look on them with an eye assisted by the *Telescope*, they plainly appear true Constellations made up of a multitude of bright (though little) Stars ; so there are Theological Doctrines, which to Philosophers, and others that look on them with the naked eye of Natural Reason, seem to be but light and fantastical things ; which yet, when Reason, assisted and heightened by Revelation, comes to contemplate, it manifestly sees them to be true and celestial Lights, which only their sublimity keeps conceal'd from our weak (naked) eyes.

F I N I S.

